

HINDUSTAN
UNDER FRENCH INFLUENCES



THE BEGUM SOMBRE
DIED 1836

HINDUSTĀN UNDER FREE· LANCES

1770-1820

SKETCHES OF MILITARY ADVENTURE IN
HINDUSTĀN DURING THE PERIOD IMMEDI-
ATELY PRECEDING BRITISH OCCUPATION.

BY

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"HISTORY OF INDIA," "THE FALL OF THE MOGHAL EMPIRE," AND OTHER WORKS

WITH A PREFACE BY THE LATE

Rt. HON. SIR RICHARD TEMPLE, BART., ETC., ETC.

(*Sometime Governor of Bombay*)

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS AND MAP

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To

FIELD-MARSHAL THE EARL ROBERTS, V.C.,
ETC., ETC.

MY LORD,

The opinion on the first draft of this work which you were good enough to express has emboldened me to ask permission to inscribe this page with your honoured name.

I am, respectfully yours,

THE AUTHOR.

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

THE chapters in this book originally appeared in the *Calcutta Review*, and at the request of many readers the work was published in book form in Calcutta in 1901 (on account of the author) under the title of *The Great Anarchy*. The author, dissatisfied with the form in which the volume was issued, cancelled the publication after the subscribers' copies had been distributed. This new and revised edition has been prepared for circulation in this country, and the title has been changed to one more indicative of the contents of the volume.

PREFACE

I HAVE been asked by Mr. Henry George Keene, with whom I have an almost lifelong friendship, to write a brief preface to this work of his. The title of the book is *The Great Anarchy*, and the narrative depicts the situation of India just before the British acquired power. The words "Darkness before Dawn" have been applied to heathenism before the rise of Christianity. They may also have a political significance, and in that sense they possess a wondrous applicability to the condition of India during the course of the eighteenth century before the Imperial control introduced by the British soon after its close. Nor in the chequered history of all the ages had India known such an anarchy as that which then prevailed. When I landed in India about the middle of the nineteenth century, no witnesses survived to attest the horrors and miseries of that time, but the children or at least the grandchildren of the sufferers were still present to recount the testimony handed down to them by their parents.¹ Thus an immense volume of tradition remained in the fullest force. Mr. Keene himself resided and exercised authority for many years in the tracts and regions most severely affected by the calamities and visitations. I also had a similar experience, and perhaps had even wider opportunities for measuring the enormous dimensions of this widespread destruction. The Moghal

¹ The writer of the following chapters twice conversed with actual survivors: a jemadar of Geo. Thomas's service and a man who had been in the "Gosain" brigade of Himsat Bahadur in 1788.—H. G. K.

HINDUSTAN

invasion of Central Asia in the Middle Ages has been likened to a shipwreck of the nations. A similar catastrophe overtook some of the noblest nationalities of India 150 years ago. Nothing but the strong arm of British power could have raised them from this "slough of despond." The area thus submerged by this inundation of misfortune comprised the Northern, the Central, and the Western parts of India. It was not much less than a million of square miles, and must have contained over one hundred millions of people, all unhappy and troubled in a greater or lesser degree. With the whole of this area I have been in one way or another officially connected, and have met the immediate descendants of those who were concerned in the affairs of that troublous era. Thus having personal knowledge of these regions and their several nationalities, I am qualified to explain the merits of Mr. Keene's present work.

He is himself extraordinarily capable of unravelling the skeins of this complex subject, in which personalities and nationalities, diversities and contrarieties are combined and confused. Yet out of all this confusion he evolves a narrative, lucid and succinct, so that the reader who may desire to follow the romantic fortunes of any individual, or family, or political party, can do so with ease. Indeed, when undertaking to deal with this subject he approached it with a mass of preparatory and collateral information gathered through many years of study—a study, too, conducted often on the very scenes of the events. His first considerable work was entitled *The Fall of the Moghal Empire*, a theme demanding the powers of an epic poet, had such a one arisen in Asia. This event, vitally affecting what was then, next after China, the finest part of Asia, began to come about in the days when the crown of England descended from King William to Queen Anne and when the star of Marlborough was in the ascendant. The descent once set in, motion proceeded with the rapidity with which a mass of rock

rolls down a precipice to the abyss beneath. So the story of this series of events, tending under the direction of Providence to one and the same fatal result, was graphically told by Mr. Keene in his first book. This was followed by his other work, entitled *A Sketch of the History of Hindustan*, relating to a region which formed an important section in the vast theatre of disturbance, though it did not comprise the whole. Then came his monograph on Sindhia, the only one of the Maratha rulers who tried to educe order out of the chaos of anarchy. Thus armed with learning and with something more than that, namely, the knowledge gained by residence on the spot or by contact with the descendants of the very actors in the historic tragedies, Mr. Keene essays his task in a manner that no other living writer could display.

Such a narrative will naturally embrace the movements of Native Indian princes, rulers, rebels, upstarts, and brigands whenever their brigandage was on a scale large enough to require mention, which it but too often was. But in the narrative there is another element, and that a most peculiar one, which will perhaps have more interest for the English reader than the purely Native Indian parts of the story; and the element is in this wise. An English reader, who though possessing general culture might not have followed the details of Asiatic warfare and disturbance, would probably be surprised to hear that, in the anarchy which followed the downfall of "The Great Moghal" and prepared the way for British rule, European adventurers outside the control of any European Government, British or other, were among the main factors. These Europeans, more of continental than of British stock, were like stormy petrels hovering over the sea of trouble, or like mariners in their barques riding on the crests of the waves, often gearing the breakers, yet rarely striking on them and but seldom engulfed. Often they directed the political storms, and

sometimes they even guided the whirlwinds. Their origin was as various as their employments : Italians, Savoyards, French, Flemish, Dutch, and occasionally even British ; some were of gentle, almost noble birth, some were soldiers from the ranks, some were from the forecastle, some were deserters, some were mere swash-bucklers, some were gentlemen and administrators, some were honourable though rough soldiers, some were mere money-makers, and some were adventurers of the meanest type. Many, perhaps most of them were French. Before the French Revolution, say 1790, they were of good birth ; after that they were of a very inferior class.

Asiatic rulers have always been glad to obtain the services of Europeans so long as these continued to be servants, and it is only when such a servant begins to be masterful that jealousy arises, either on the part of the ruler or his Asiatic servants. Besides this general motive, there was a special motive for employing Europeans when political existence was always a struggle for life and death on the part of all Native Indians who had to keep their heads above the seething surface of political whirlpools. Then it was that they must have at any cost men who could drill troops in camp and lead them in the field. Doubtless, when such men rose to high commands, having organised their Asiatic battalions for victory, and then were entrusted with high civil authority, then, no doubt, their Asiatic fellow-servants must have been jealous, and such jealousy must have been dangerous, involving among other risks the chances of assassination. Still, in the main they were so useful as to be quite the necessary men to their employers under the stress of emergency. But there was yet another reason for their employment. The infant Colossus of British power was already showing itself in several quarters. Its growth was precarious ; still, growth there always was, often depressed, but never stamped out, ever springing forward again after temporary retrocession. There was

about it a vitality, a spring, a verve, a motive force, a steadiness and stability which simply struck terror into the minds and hearts of every Asiatic, high and low. Its qualities were so alien to anything known in Oriental experience, that all India lay under the dread, like that of a nightmare, that the British, if so minded, might attain to universal mastery. Of this masterful ambition, and of this persevering temper the signs were everywhere apparent. It immediately occurred to every Indian who cut his path to power, or waded through blood to the seat of temporary authority, that his best chance of saving himself from the advancing British was to employ some man or men of the fateful European races. A man of British nationality would not be suitable, because presumably he could not be trusted to oppose his own people. Moreover, he would not be obtainable, because, if really an able man, he could find employment under his own Government. Thus the men available would be of continental origin. It was thought that even if they were not as effective as the English, they were at all events white men with a good share of the capacity which always distinguishes Europeans. Some were chosen either in reference to credentials or to known antecedents; others, again, were employed first in some humble capacity and then raised themselves higher by sheer prowess. Several of them won victories or other military advantages for their chiefs. All of them without exception were rewarded with a richness astonishing even to Anglo-Indians. Some of them amassed really immense fortunes in reference to the nature of their work and to the circumstances of their epoch. Indeed, the amounts and sums of wealth would at first sight seem unaccountable when it is remembered that at this time India was agitated from end to end, her social life being shaken to its very foundations. It is, however, to be remembered that, despite all superficial appearances to the contrary, the accumulated wealth of

India has at all times been enormous. Casual observers may be tempted to suppose otherwise, but those whose gaze can penetrate to the bottom well know that with an abounding population of thrifty habits, addicted generally if not universally to save and spare, to accumulate and to secrete, there will always be resources amassed in a smaller or greater degree according to the ability of the individual. Consequently at this dark era—that is to say, in the second half of the eighteenth century—there were incalculable quantities of stored and hoarded possessions. Therefore it is that in a brief time these European soldiers of fortune acquired that wealth that would have appeared to them fabulous before they entered the Oriental service, and must have transcended any visions that may have haunted their ambitious dreams. Some of them were not content with Native Indian subordinates, but employed Europeans in lesser, even humble, capacities. Such men, of course, merged into obscurity, while the names of their leaders remained conspicuous. Thus the number of Europeans great and small in Native Indian service was at certain times and in certain places quite appreciable. On the whole it may be said that in the contests which were going on at this era, running sometimes crosswise, at other times parallel, to one another, and oftentimes overlapping each other, the Europeans in native employ did in some degree mould events and almost directed the strategy of conflicting forces. Their system of drill and discipline was generally adopted, especially in the artillery and infantry, and where it was not adopted, particularly in the cavalry which was usually irregular, the results were disastrous. One of the great authorities of the time is understood to have pronounced that the Native Indian princes would have fared better had they never made use of the alien aid of the Europeans. It is difficult to say whether any such dictum could be affirmed or not, inasmuch as the Native States, which then comprised three-fourths of

India, were foredoomed to subjugation by the British power, whatever they might do or not do. But this much may be affirmed, that owing to the European officers in the Native States the rising floods and streams of anarchy were diverted in directions where they would not otherwise have flowed. Moreover, when at the beginning of the nineteenth century the British came to close quarters with the Native States, the influence of these European officers had abated and their numbers had decreased. Nevertheless the drill and discipline which they had introduced still remained and caused the native resistance to the British forces to be stiffer than it would otherwise have been on several well-fought fields.

It may be well for a moment to dwell on the character of the area, the field and theatre of action, in which these European adventurers, under their Native Indian chiefs and sovereigns, fought, conquered, conducted or endured sieges, and managed provinces during the eighteenth century. These lands are indeed some of the most classic and historic in the East, and upon each one of them these white soldiers of fortune had left the mark of European handiwork, although serving under Native Indian *régime*, before British authority came to comprehend the whole country with its all-embracing control. Such a summary survey of this historical geography can be immediately had from a glance at the map.

Let a beginning be made from about midway in the north of India, midway also in the southern base of the long Himalayan mountain range; that is to say in Hindustan, or the upper basin of the Ganges and its affluent the Jumna; ever the principal seat of Empire in India, a uniquely Imperial province; politically the most important part of the whole country. In it are the twin capitals of Dehli and Agra; and around Dehli in particular are laid some of the most striking scenes in Mr. Keene's drama of the Great Anarchy. Then let us,

advancing due south, in imagination cross first the Ganges, then the Jumna. So we pass by Ujain, with its ruins of hoar antiquity, then by Gwalior, the rock-citadel destined to become the seat of the one power that stayed the course of the Great Anarchy, and by Rajputāna, bordering the Western Desert of India, that after severe struggles barely escaped submergence under the flood of almost universal revolution. Next let us, still proceeding southwards, march into the very heart of Central India, crossing the Vindhya range and the broad uplands and undulations connected therewith, right down to the north bank of the Narbada, point after point in which is signalised by some event in Mr. Keene's story. Crossing this, the queen of beauty among Indian rivers, we must on our historic tour, ever advancing southwards, ascend the Sutpura range, the true backbone of the Indian continent, descend into the valley of the Tapti river, and so reach the northern uplands of the Deccan, marked by the remains of nationalities many centuries old and by the comparatively modern associations of the Great Anarchy. So we arrive at the Deccan, the southern plateau of the Indian continent, second only to Hindustan in importance amidst the mediæval revolutions and in the more recent politics of India. For Mr. Keene's story the Deccan must be divided into two distinct spheres of action, one the Deccan of the Hindu Marathas, with its capital at Poona, the other the Deccan of the Moghals, or the Moslem Nizams, with its capital at Haidarabad. Now this line of imaginative march has extended over full a thousand miles. Outside the regions thus compassed there are no doubt provinces in the north-west, the east, the south. Still within it are most of the dominant places in India, most of the localities best deserving the attention of the student who desires to understand the miserable condition of the heritage which fell into the hands of the British at the beginning of the nineteenth century; the vineyard which, having

CHAPTER I

Difference between progressive races and unprogressive races—
The steel head needed for the bamboo lance—The Greeks in India—The Portuguese at Goa—The French in the Carnatic—Mahadaji Sindhia on white troops.

OF all historic world-dramas none has been more enduring than that which presents the secular conflict of Europe and Asia; the tribes of movement and the tribes of repose; the national forces that are static and the national energies that are dynamic. Beginning with the crime and punishment symbolised in the story of Cain, we find kindred races always acting under opposite impulses; and even when (as under the Achæmenids) Asia was the aggressor, Europe always conquered in the long run. This was noticed by Hippocrates, who accounted for it by observing that, while the Greeks fought for their country, the Persians fought only for their king.

The difference is the more remarkable by reason of the antagonism to which it has given rise. The energetic son of the frost, constrained to extort from Nature the niggard elements of existence, has been always contemptuous, while the vexation of the more restful native of sunnier lands has too often become hatred for those by whom his quiet has been disturbed: the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, and the attack on the Pekin Legations in 1900, are among the more familiar modern instances of bloody but hopeless effort. In the long run discipline and moral superiority are rewarded by success; although this, indeed, has not been the rule always. Xenophon

was a mere leader of mercenaries ; Alexander was a marauding despot ; Julian and Valerian were unable to prevail. In the Crusades of the Middle Ages fortune still was variable ; and Bajazet overthrew the Christians at Nikopolis with frightful slaughter, though the latter had some amount of patriotism for their support. Under Mohammed II. the Byzantine rump of the Roman Empire was entirely extirpated, and his successors gained several temporary successes over the Christian armies. Yet, on the whole, the tide was ebbing : the Moors were expelled from Spain, the Turks were rolled back from Austria ; the European armies everywhere surpassed in skill, science, and cohesion, prevailing over the more numerous, but less disciplined hosts of their opponents, until the French in the Carnatic found out a solution in setting the ranks of the one under the leadership of the other. With a small head of sharp steel, the long lance has learned to follow.

That the Oriental warrior is by no means bound to be personally inferior to the European in valour or endurance has been shown in many instances, from the Punjab wars of the middle of the nineteenth century to the Frontier campaigns that have marked its close. But other things must be equal before the two can meet on equal terms ; so long as the civilised Power has abundant supplies of civilised officers it will ultimately prevail, even though its foes be ever so numerous, and even though its men be of the same race, wholly or in large part, as those against whom they are to fight. The barbarian, left to the control of his own chiefs, loses confidence and resolution, so that ten men may chase a thousand. In the battle of Plassy (1757), Clive repulsed a regular army, 50,000 strong, horse and foot, with 40 guns, having less than 3,000 men with him, of whom only 800 were white troops ; he had no cavalry and only 8 guns. At Dehli, in 1857, a force of 50,000 disciplined troops, with a vast artillery, a first-class arsenal and fortifications constructed

by our own engineers, were held at bay by a mixed army of natives and British, of whom there were never 5,000 fit for duty, but who finally stormed their defences and broke their array for good and all.

The apparent exception in the South African War at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth is not real. The British troops had the superiority in other respects besides numbers; but the enemy had officers acquainted with the country, and began the quarrel with vast resources in money and the materials of war. And they were not Orientals, but a resolute yeomanry of considerable fighting power. The rule that Oriental multitudes cannot contend against the white man is one that may be taken to be universal.

The complete explanation of this persistent fact may be a matter for discussion; of its existence there can be no doubt. Whether due to climate, or to institutions, the ultimate victory always falls to the men of the West; and amongst immediate causes must be reckoned the inability of Oriental officers to lead. For the most part corrupt and wanting in any cause more noble than their own sordid interests, they fail to inspire in their men that sense of trust in themselves and in each other which gives solidarity to a body of men. The soldiers may be as brave and devoted as the Turkish privates—for example.—have always been; but that perfection of discipline must always be lacking which is what we speak of as “the steel lancehead”; the officers bid their men to go on when they ought to be showing them the way.

Necessarily the combination of a nucleus of white soldiers will turn the scale in Eastern warfare. This was long ago shown—perhaps for the first time at the battle of Cunaxa (B.C. 401)—where the Greeks held their ground and killed more than their own number of the Persian enemy, even though the death of Cyrus hindered a perfect victory. Though the royal army numbered, it is said, 400,000, the Greeks retired to their camp in good

order, and made such terms that their retreat was practically secure. Without guides they made their way through the snows of Armenia and the harassing Kurds ; starved and fevered, they at last reached the shores of the Euxine, having lost only 14 per cent. of their number on the long and perilous march.

Three quarters of a century later, Alexander led a Grecian army to the same regions ; but his campaigns only exemplify a portion of our argument. The victories over Darius Codomannus, and over Porus, the Punjab King, were won by a man of high military genius at the head of a considerable army of European veterans ; and in such cases there could be little doubt as to the result. But the position of Seleukos, and of the Hellenic rulers who succeeded him in Central Asia, affords a stronger instance of the value of Western character. The Macedonians not only held Syria, but dominated Turkestan and the regions on the Parapomisus, for full two hundred years, at one time ruling from the Euphrates to the Indus. Absorbed at last, and hemmed in on all sides, they finally disappeared ; but not before they had planted Western arts and institutions in Mesopotamia, Khorasan, and Bactria. Gradually, in what manner is not exactly known, they were pressed over the Hindu-kush range by tumultuous movements of Parthian and Scythian hordes, until they finally settled in the hills and plains on the Upper Indus. They even reached the lands between that river and its tributary—now known as the Jhelam—on whose banks Alexander had won his great battle. Here, stretching from Kashmir to Multan, was their last great settlement ; and here, without means of communication or reinforcement from Europe, they became gradually assimilated to the Scytho-Buddhist system before which they had long been drifting. This occurred about the beginning of the Christian era ; but was not accompanied by any violent catastrophe and did not cause any sudden destruction of such residue of

civilisation as had been up to that time preserved. We are informed by Plutarch—writing in the first century A.D.—that Alexander had “inspired India with the arts of Hellas”; and Ælian, about one hundred years later, recorded that the Persian and Indian Kings amused their leisure with hearing recitations from the poems of Homer. All these temporary successes of the European intellect, attested, as they are, by the evidence of coinage and sculpture, must have been due to the same mental supremacy of which the episode of the *Anabasis* was a capital, if transient, example in another field.

Faint, therefore, as these traces may seem, they are interesting signs of influence that only needed more favouring conditions to develop into more enduring action. In the remains of Greek culture still forthcoming in that corner of India—especially in the series of coins, at present incomplete—we find unquestionable evidence of skill and character asserted in difficult circumstances, and maintaining for a considerable period some of the distinguishing features of European civilisation amidst environments of a discouraging kind. The Indo-Greek Kings assumed the high title of “Basileus” in courts and camps which were long frequented and admired. So long as communications remained open, they were supplied with imported women of their own race; and when the last of these kings—by name Menander—became a convert to Buddhism, the colony slowly merged in the surrounding population. But they left their mark in the superscriptions of their Scythian successors, whose coinage for some time retained the Greek language, with much of Greek art in the designs. Jupiter passed into Shiva, or Buddha; and Kadphises called himself “Basileus.” These obscure but interesting phases of history have been put together and set forth, with equal research and eloquence, by Count Goblet d’Alviella, sometime Rector of Brussels University (*Le que l’Inde doit à la Grèce*, Paris, 1897).

But it is time to turn to matters of more recent actuality.

For fifteen centuries after the conversion of Menander, European intercourse with India was sparse and transitory. The Romans traded with what are now Gujarat and Sindh ; traces of decadent art are still found in those regions, and Latin writers refer to commercial intercourse ; but of political or military influences no trace is forthcoming until the bombardment of Calicut by the ships of the Portuguese under Don Vasco da Gama, in 1501 A.D. Nine years later, Albuquerque had a busy year with the Muslim ruler of Bijapur—Yusaf Adil Shah—from whom he finally took Goa in the end of November, 1510 ; the city was given up to plunder for three days, the Muslim inhabitants being massacred in cold blood.

This conquest, in its ultimate results, gave to the crown of Portugal a capital, religious, commercial and political and a territory of more than one thousand square miles, in which was founded a colony somewhat resembling that of the Greeks in the Punjab, only preserved from the same fate ultimately by the accidental support of other nations. During the first century or so of its existence, the settlement enjoyed great apparent prosperity ; during the years of struggle when the British in India were almost hopelessly fighting for existence, "Goa presented a scene of military, ecclesiastical, and commercial magnificence which had no parallel. . . . The brilliant pomp and picturesque display were due to the fact that it was not only a flourishing harbour but also the centre of a great Power. The Portuguese based their dominion in India on conquest by the sword" (*Imperial Gazetteer*, v. 101).

But the foundations of this imposing edifice were defective. Fanaticism and luxury corrupted the colony ; every European assumed the airs of an aristocrat, the ladies being shut up in the Oriental manner, while the

gentlemen went abroad in silk attire, riding with jewelled trappings and stirrups of gilded silver. "Almost every traveller who visited Goa during its prime tells the same curious story regarding the rashness with which the Portuguese matrons pursued their amours. . . . And the Goanese became a byword, as the type of an idle, a haughty and a corrupt society" (*Ibid.*, p. 102).

Nor was this the worst. . . . Apart from the ruin prepared by the vices of their own conduct, the colonists were beset by the ceaseless hostility of the surrounding natives, excited by the ruthless violence with which they persecuted the local creeds and attempted the propagation of their own faith. The Portuguese, blending the Peninsular attributes of bigotry and a belated chivalry, had neither forgotten the Crusades nor remembered how completely unsuccessful those romantic endeavours had ultimately been. With a tenacity worthy of respect, they blended a deplorable hardness of heart and a fatuous desire to make the natives conform to their beliefs which was no better than ludicrous. Devotion to a high aim was, indeed, not wanting; and the proselytising fervour bore fruit in monuments of sumptuous splendour, some of which are still to be seen erect among the palm groves and jungles of Velha Goa. The better side of this appears in the unselfish labours of St Francis Xavier—not, however, a Portuguese by birth—by the educational work of the Franciscan Order in Portuguese India, and by the superb churches and colleges built in the chief cities. The darker aspect began to show itself as early as the reign of John III., an able civil ruler, but a fanatic. Under him the Inquisition was established in Portugal and its dependencies; "and it was directly due to his example that the fatal policy of religious persecution was introduced into India" (*Morse Stephens, Albuquerque*, in "Rulers of India").

Two generations later, the Spanish King, Philip II., assumed the government, on the disappearance of Don

Sebastian ; and we may be sure that the work of the Inquisition did not suffer at the hands of Alva's master. At the same time the rivalry of northern nations was widening the breach already begun by bigotry and moral deterioration. The Dutch were on the crest of the wave that was rising against Spain in the Netherlands ; and it was not to be expected that they would abstain from molesting the dependencies of a kingdom against which they were already urged by the stimulus of commercial competition. While these hardy and not very scrupulous Teutons were blockading Goa and driving the Portuguese from minor settlements on the Malabar Coast and in Ceylon, the English were sapping their maritime power at sea ; and the recovery of the Portuguese Crown by a native dynasty found its Indian possessions reduced to the dimensions which they still hold by British sufferance.

It is, however, worthy of note that the fall of Portuguese power in Western India was in no degree due to any military reverses at the hands of the native Powers. Weak as the colony became, it always held its own against Hindu and Mohammedan assaults, however numerously supported and by whatever momentary successes attended. 'On the other side of India, indeed, the similar efforts of the Native Powers were more permanently successful. Hugli, near Calcutta, was founded by the Portuguese in 1537, but soon became an object of hostility to the Moghal Government. About a century later, the Emperor Shah Jahan, having been offended by various marks of religious and political insolence, gave orders that the Portuguese should be expelled : what followed was almost an anticipation of Cawnpore in the Mutiny.

The year 1631 had been a dry season in Bengal, and an attempt to send away the non-combatant Christians by ship failed by reason of the shallow state of the Hugli river, which caused the boats to take the ground, the

main stream then flowing in another channel. Consequently the Moghal commander was enabled to make a complete investment of the town and blockade it by land and water. The garrison was of small number, but the Muslim long feared to deliver an assault. At length, after an interval of three and a half months, the besiegers blew up a part of the defences by mining, and, in the confusion, effected an entrance into the town ; the fort then capitulated on promise of life ; but over a thousand armed Europeans were slain, and the rest of the population removed as prisoners to Agra.

Before the end of the seventeenth century the degeneracy of the Portuguese was deplored by the French traveller Bernier, who at the same time predicted that a French force under Condé or Turenne would "trample under foot" all the armies of the Moghal Empire. The vaunt was to be verified in the course of the next hundred years : the French were the first to point the bamboo lance with steel. The settlement at Pondichéri was founded in 1674 by François Martin ; and when, a quarter of a century later, he was besieged there by the Dutch, a portion of his garrison consisted of natives of India, dressed, disciplined and armed in the European style—in a word, what have been known later as "sepoy."

One of Martin's successors, Dumas, did much to develop this system, and in 1735 handed over to his successor a well-drilled force of native infantry, stiffened by a small nucleus of Europeans. Eleven years later, the French, under Labourdonnais, captured Fort St. George at Madras, the principal military post of the British on the Coromandel Coast, and, before the end of the year, fought a Moghal army which had come to the relief of the British and gave them two beatings, the last being decisive. The Muslim leader had 10,000 troops, a large portion of whom were cavalry ; the French commanders, Paradis and Esprésménil, had 430 Europeans and 700 sepoy, besides the assistance of a

handful of men from the Fort. This action—known in history as the battle of S. Thomé—is said by an English historian to have “inverted the position of the European settler and the native overlord.” It at least demonstrated the permanent superiority of civilised over barbaric warfare.

The first person to take particular notice of the essential superiority of the Occidental as a fighting man was an astute Hindu of this period, Madhava, or Mahadaji, Sindhia, the founder of the present House of Gwaliör. In the year 1778 the British authorities of Bombay sent a column towards the Deccan which was met and opposed by a Maratha force under the chief command of Sindhia. On January 9, 1779, the column arrived at Talegaon Dabhara, about twenty miles from the city of Poona, where they were suddenly encompassed with a ring of fire. They fought for two days, and then, throwing their guns into a tank, retreated to Wadgaon, three miles to the rearward. Decimated and disheartened, the force here surrendered; and the British officers were summoned to durbar to treat of the terms of surrender. It is on record that, in that moment of passing triumph, Sindhia said to a British officer who sat by him: “What soldiers you have! Their line is like a brick wall; and when one falls, another steps into the gap; such are the troops I would wish to lead.” This remark rests on the two-fold testimony of Sir John Malcolm and Captain Grant Duff, both conversant with the traditions of those days: and Sindhia soon acted upon the opinion so expressed. If he could not have British soldiers, he would at least engage the services of European officers and impart to his troops a tincture of European discipline. The ablest and most successful of the military adventurers of the eighteenth century in India was an officer twice chosen by Mahadaji. This was the famous General de Boigne; but before him we must briefly notice a few earlier labourers in the same field..

CHAPTER II

Monsieur Law, the Franco-Scot—Walter Reinhardt, alias General Sombre—Médoc.

THE first, in point of time, among the "men we are considering was Monsieur Law—the "Mushir Lass" of native writers—a nephew of the Scotsman, John Law of Lauriston, whose financial schemes did so much mischief to France during the Regency. His career as an adventurer was neither long nor glorious ; but he was a professional officer, and began military life with good prospects, distinguishing himself particularly in 1748, when Admiral Boscawen was repulsed in his attempt to besiege Pondichéri. The Governor of the French Settlement at that time was the famous Dupleix, then engaged in his life-struggle with the British, from whom he had taken Madras and seemed in a fair way to wrest their whole power and existence in India. Direct war between the rival nations ought to have ceased in 1749, when the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle became known in India ; but Dupleix, by taking up the cause of two Muslim claimants, was held by the Madras authorities—restored by the treaty—to be aiming at the position of Lord-paramount over Southern India. They, therefore, brought forward two competitors, and thus—under guise of a war of succession—the rival European Powers were opposed again: Dupleix at that time seemed to have the omens in his favour. In the beginning of 1751 both the French candidates were in possession, the one as Viceroy

of the Deccan—what is now called “Nizam”—the other, as his Nawab or Deputy, in the Carnatic, or Province of Arcot, in which Madras was situated. The British aspirant for the latter was hemmed in by a superior force at Trichinopoly, and the fall of that place seemed imminent, when the genius of a “heaven-born captain” turned the scale. With a handful of men and a few small guns, Clive dashed upon Arcot in the month of August; and, the hostile garrison hurrying out on the other side, the town was held for the claimant favoured by the British. Dupleix saw the necessity of a counter-blow; but being at the moment left without a general, resolved, in an evil hour, to give the command to Law, who had been home to France since the siege of Pondichéry, and had just returned to duty in high health and spirits.

As this is not the history of the war, it may be enough to sum up the story of the investment of Trichinopoly in a few words. Law proved his unfitness for command in every instance: the British leaders, Lawrence, Clive, and Dalton, were men of energy and resource; and Law's part in the war ended, in the middle of June, 1752, with the surrender to them of himself and 35 officers, with nearly three thousand men. A brilliant summary of these operations is to be found in Macaulay's *Essay on Clive*. For fuller details Malleson's *History of the French in India* will be found both interesting and impartial.

What efforts were possible Dupleix continued to make, until his recall some two years later; but everything was against him, and he was at last sacrificed to the unjust impatience of an ungrateful nation. Meanwhile Law, finding all prospects clouded in the South, had gone to Bengal, on being set at liberty after the Convention of Sadras in 1754.

Two years later, when Sirāj-ud-daulah made that attack on Calcutta which led to the Black Hole and all its consequences, Law was Agent to the French Company at

Kasimbazar, near the capital of the Moghal Nawab, or Deputy, of Bengal, the temporary victor. When, in the following year, Law's ancient antagonist, Clive, came up to retrieve the British position in Bengal, one of his earlier measures was the siege of Chandernagar, the French headquarters. Bombarded from the river, the place capitulated ; but a few of the French officers, with about fifty white soldiers and twenty sepoys, marched out and joined Law. Kasimbazar was accordingly threatened by the conquerors, who disregarded the fact that the French there enjoyed the nominal protection of the Nawab. That unhappy chief, seeing no immediate object in breaking with the British, dismissed Law and his men, furnishing them with supplies and undertaking to recall them if, as was expected, war should soon break out. "Recall us ?" Law answered, prompted by experience of Clive and his own British blood. "Alas ! Your Highness will never see us again."

Law's prophecy was fulfilled : in June the Nawab, betrayed by his most trusted officer, was defeated at Plassy and soon afterwards captured and put to death by the traitor's son. Law and his associates wandered up the country and offered their swords to the Hindu Raja Ramnarain, who was in charge of the Province of Bihār. Pursued by Colonel (afterwards Sir) Eyre Coote, they took refuge in the territory of the Nawab of Oudh, finally engaging in the service of the Crown Prince, who had fled from Dehli and was bent upon obtaining reinforcement in that quarter.

This period—that immediately succeeding the battle of Plassy—deserves attention on more grounds than one. It was then that men's minds began to be occupied with what is now the Lieutenantcy of Bengal ; the Company at home beginning to see that the efforts of their servants in the South-east—however successful over the French—were somewhat of a false start, so far as access to the heart of the Indian Empire was concerned ; while the French

officers who had lost their occupation in the Deccan were at the same time throwing an anxious eye towards the future. "So far as I can see," said Law to the native historian of the time, "there is nothing that you could call 'Government' between Patna and Dehli. If men in the position of Shuja-ud-daulah (the Nawab of Gudh) would take me up loyally, I would not only beat off the English, but would undertake to administer the Empire." *

Associated with Law in this arduous enterprise were men, some of whose names will recur on the following pages; Médoc, Reinhardt, Du Drenec, and others of whom no definite record remains, such as the Comte de Moidavre, and the Chevalier de Crecy; M.M. St. Frais and Courtin, who had served hopelessly but bravely at Plassy, were captured by Coote on their way to Lucknow in 1758.

We have now to follow the fortunes of the remaining fugitives, so far as fact or fancy will lead us. Without authoritative commissions or regular pay, far from letters, books or any of the resources of civilisation, they wandered over the alluvial plains, steaming with monsoon miasma, or basking in deadly heat, sometimes feasted by Nawabs, at other times living on the scanty fare of the bazaars; everywhere followed by the relentless British, yet keenly cherishing the hope of revenge and altered fortune. At last they found a momentary refuge with the Crown Prince—ast forlorn as themselves—in Bundelkhand, where a Hindu chief had lately founded a small principality named, after himself, Chhatarpur.

Early in 1760, however, came news from Dehli which led the Prince to fresh enterprise; his father, the Emperor, had been murdered by a ruthless minister, and the Prince also learned that the Afghans had invaded the Punjab and occupied Dehli. Apparently afraid to return, he assumed the succession, with the title of Shah Alam, at a

* *Siar-ul-mutakkarin*, by Ghulam Hossain Khan.

village in Bihār called Kanauti, and called on all loyal servants of the Crown to give him aid where he was.

“The Eastern Subahs”—to use a phrase of the old historians—were, at the time of the Prince’s proclamation held by a nominee of the British to whom Clive had been partly indebted for his rapid triumph. This nobleman was Jāfar Ali Khan, the “Meer Jaffier” of history, and his deputy in Bihār was the Raja Ramnarain, who was mentioned above as holding the same post under the older government. This latter, having sent to Jāfar for help, came forth from the sheltering walls of Patna to oppose the proceedings of his sovereign, the titular Emperor, Shah Alam; but the Imperialists repelled him with serious loss, in which was included that of four companies of British sepoys with their officers. On this the Raja, wounded and alarmed, fell back on Patna, which, for the moment, was not besieged.

Shortly after this success, the Emperor encountered an Anglo-Bengali force; and, not prevailing, adopted—probably on Law’s advice—the soldierly expedient of a flank-march, hoping to cut between the enemy and his capital of Murshidabad and seize upon that city in the absence of its defenders. But he was once more baffled by the superior activity of the British leaders, and in April turned to the only course left him, the siege of Patna. The batteries were quickly established, and Law effected a breach, after five days of open trenches, proceeding at once to the assault before the Anglo-Bengali troops should have time to come up and raise the siege. The stormers reached the ramparts with help from scaling ladders, the breach so hurriedly attempted being far from complete. On reaching the top, the Imperialists were met by the flower of the garrison, animated by the presence of Dr. Fullarton, a British Medical Officer; and the assailants drew off for a time. The attack, however, was twice renewed, and the defenders of Patna were on the point of being overpowered when help appeared from

an unexpected quarter. Captain Knox, sent from Murshidabad to watch the Imperialists, had run across the interposed three hundred miles in thirteen days. Falling upon the Emperor's army at the hour—11 p.m.—when the men were resting after dinner, without accoutrements or arms, he put them to flight with his small following, of whom only two hundred were Europeans.

After some manœuvring and another unsuccessful flight the Imperialists took up their winter quarters between Patna and Murshidabad, near the town of Gya. But Law's course was now all but run. On January 15, 1761, the British, who had become of sufficient strength to assume the offensive, attacked the Imperial forces at Suān, and the result was the flight of the Emperor and his native followers. In the deserted field the British commanders, Major Carnac and Captain Knox, came upon a small group consisting of about fifty foot and thirteen French officers, in the midst of whom was Law, seated astride on a now idle field-piece, with the colours of his command in his hand. Wearied with his long and fruitless wanderings, he invited death; but the British officers, approaching with uncovered heads, besought him to surrender. "To that," said the Franco-Scot, "I have no objection if you leave me my sword, which I will not part with as long as I am alive." The Major consenting, the late adversaries shook hands, and Law was taken to camp in Carnac's palanquin, which was at hand. This is our last authentic view of a brave, but very unlucky man; and we are indebted for it to Ghulām Hossain, who was much impressed by the humanity and courtesy of the scene.

One of the most remarkable among Law's followers was Walter Reinhardt, believed to have been born in the small electoral Province of Trèves, about 1720. The ties of country were not strong at that time in border-lands like that, and young Reinhardt, enlisting in the French army, found himself, in the course of the service, stationed

at Pondichéri at the time when Labourdonnais and Dupleix were making their most vigorous efforts to obstruct the designs of the British Company. After the operations already glanced at, Reinhardt was included in the surrender of Law's force at Trichinopoly in 1752, upon which he took service in a British regiment. In 1756 he deserted and again joined the French, accompanying Law to Bengal in the capacity of sergeant.

In 1760 occurred the palace revolution by which the Nawab Jäfar was deposed and Käsim Ali—"Meer Cossim"—set up in his place. Not being disposed to accept the part of a regal mute, this new ruler set about providing himself with a regular army, to the command of which he appointed an Armenian, called by the native historians Gurjin Khan, under whom Reinhardt obtained command of a battalion of foot. Stirring events were coming : the Calcutta Council in no long time quarrelled with their nominated Nawab ; Mr. Ellis, the local Agent of the Council, attempting to seize Patna, was worsted and shut up there, with one hundred and fifty of his white and coloured followers. Käsim Ali lost his head and ordered a general massacre. Gurjin and his officers demurred. "Arm the English," they said, "and we will fight them like soldiers. Butchers we are not and will not be." In this emergency recourse was had to Reinhardt, who appears to have undertaken the task without hesitation. The courtyard in which the prisoners were collected was surrounded by Reinhardt's men, who shot them down from the upper terraces ; Dr. Fullarton alone was spared.

As some attempt has been made in later days to throw doubt on this account, it may be well to notice some of the evidence on which it rests. Fullarton is not known to have left any written record of the massacre ; but his oral account must have been the original authority. Broome, in his admirable *History of the Bengal Army*, accepts it without question ; as also does Major L. T.

Smith, of Sindhiā's service, who knew the men of that day and their traditions, serving only a quarter of a century after Reinhardt's death. Smith's words are : "He undertook the criminal commission with ardour and alacrity ; but I have been credibly informed that this nefarious act haunted his mind to the last hour of his existence." The *Imperial Gazetteer* (xi. 96) accepts the story on the authority of "a contemporary letter." Lastly, it is not easy to see how such a myth could have found currency had it not had some foundation in the known character of the man.

This massacre took place after Kāsim's army had undergone several defeats, in one at least of which Reinhardt—known by the sobriquet of "Sombre"—took a handsome part. The battle of Ghiria, August 3, 1763, was most obstinate, and in the opinion of our officers, the Moghals never fought so well. At one moment they had broken the British line and captured two guns. But discipline prevailed : Kāsim and his swordsmen were put to flight before the end of the year, and forced to seek refuge with Shuja, already mentioned as the Nawab of Oudh. The British demanded their surrender, but Shuja refused ; under a curious prejudice of Oriental chivalry he undertook to murder them, if that would do. The battle of Buxar ensued, and the fugitives were driven from the camp of the Nawab, who proceeded to make peace with the victorious British. Sombre—"Somra Sahib," as he had begun to be known among the natives—went to seek his fortune in the disturbed districts south of the Jumna, finally taking service among the Bhurtpur Jats. His following by this time comprised some low Europeans whom he had attracted from among the tramps of the time, with some guns and a few companies of men from the *débris* of Kāsim's army. The total strength was then estimated at four battalions of foot, six field-pieces, chiefly manned by Europeans, and a small corps of native cavalry. Those who are acquainted with the modern

Indian "loafer" can best imagine the sort of ruffians that formed the gunners and officers of this force. Under fire a sort of stolid discipline prevailed ; in camp, drunkenness and disobedience ruled supreme. The tactics of the brigade were simple : paying no attention to the general dispositions of the force with which they might be serving, they would enter the field from whatever quarters they deemed suitable ; fire their guns with all possible precision as long as their side held its ground ; if that side gave way, they would retire their guns under a screen of infantry fire, and, in case of a total defeat, pass over bodily into the service of the victors.

In the autumn of 1774, Sombre Reinhardt was at length enabled to turn these inglorious principles of warfare to a profitable and lasting account. The Emperor had been restored and was now settled at Dehli, whence he despatched his able and high-minded minister—a Persian nobleman named Mirza Najaf Khan—to coerce the Jats, who had taken possession of the Imperial city and palace of Agra. Dislodged from this position, they eluded the Imperialists and proceeded to threaten Dehli, accompanied by Sombre and his brigade, halting at Sikandrabad, thirty-six miles from the capital, for the rainy season. On the approach of the cold weather the Mirza marched against them, with 10,000 men, under his godson, Najaf Kuli—a converted Hindu—the "Red battalion" of the Emperor's guards and a choice body of Persian horse forming the rest of his army. After some manœuvres and minor collisions, the Mirza brought the Jats to a stand at Barsana, in what is now the District of Mathra. Sending on skirmishers from his infantry under Najaf Kuli, and holding his cavalry well in hand, the Imperialist leader began a duel of artillery, in which he lost several Moghal officers and was himself wounded in the arm. Nevertheless his foot and artillery maintained a stout defence while he retired into shelter and had his arm bandaged. Hastening back to the field, he rallied his

horsemen with a fervent invocation to the God of battle, and delivered a headlong charge at the centre of the hostile line. His infantry following at the double, the Jats broke and fled, while Sombre's brigade slowly retired in good order and came over the next day. The reinforcement was welcomed; the brigade was taken into the Imperial service, a considerable fief near Dehli being assigned for its support; and its commander was appointed to the charge of Agra, where he passed the residue of his life, taking no further part in active military service.

It is somewhat shocking to our modern notions of historical justice to have to relate this peaceful and honourable conclusion to the career of such a blood-stained and faithless *condottiere*. General Sombre, as he was now called, had a Muslim wife, who went mad; but he had no further trouble to the day of his death, which happened in May, 1778. He was buried in a fine tomb in the Catholic cemetery of the Civil Lines at Agra; and a still more substantial monument remains, in the shape of a church—since converted into a printing-office connected with the convent—where a tablet is still to be seen bearing a Latin inscription. This sets forth that the building was provided at the expense of “Dominus Walter Reinhard,” the final *t* being omitted, evidently for the sake of euphony. What became of the fief will be noted later on.

The battle of Barsāna deserves the detailed account above recorded, not only for its illustration of the military habits of Sombre, but still more as an instance of the value of European discipline. Whatever may have been the gallantry of the Mirza and his godson, there can be little doubt that the firmness and energy of the infantry attack by which the charge of cavalry was followed up was mainly due to the discipline of the Mirza's French officers and the initiative which they imparted to their men. Moidavre, Crecy, and Du Drenec were gentlemen

of character and experience, much more than a match for the bucolic Jats and Sombre's loafers. But the best known of these officers was Médoc, of whom a brief account must now be given. This adventurer had entered the Jat service about the same time as Reinhardt, though not amongst his followers, having a distinct brigade of his own. A native of Brittany, he had originally come to India with the unfortunate Count Lally, after whose defeats and captivity he had, like many others, found his way to Bengal, where his courage and force of character had attracted a following which grew to a force of five battalions of foot, with twenty guns, and five hundred horse. Shortly after the Restoration, in 1771, he went to Dehli, where he entered the Imperial service and distinguished himself in operations against the Marathas under the orders of Mirza Najaf, as well as in the campaign against the Jats. About 1781 he was despatched to the assistance of the Rana of Gohad, then engaged in a struggle for the fort and district of Gwalior. Here he was surprised, one wet night, by a party of Rohila horse—presumably in the Maratha interest—and forced to retreat upon the old Imperial palace of Fatehpur Sikri, whence he finally made his way to Agra. Here he recruited his men and cast new guns, but is not known to have been actively engaged in the field; and in 1782 he made over his brigade—no doubt for a handsome consideration—to the Rana of Gohad, and returned to France, where he was ultimately killed in a duel.¹ Independently of the battle of Barsāna, Médoc is not distinguished by any military achievement; and his career is remarkable only as showing what might be done for himself, in those wild times, by a soldier of no special intellect. He seems to have founded a family in

¹ Médoc's brigade was no more fortunate after the commander's retreat, having been again surprised by the Marathas, evincing to the last the negligence of a force organised by an officer more remarkable for courage than for conduct.

Brittany, a member of which has been met with in the Channel Islands, in a good social position, within recent times.

A very different man first came to the front during this Gwalior War ; but the military career of Count de Boigne demands a separate chapter.

CHAPTER III

General Martin—Early life of Benoît Boigne—His Indian commencements and engagement by Sindhia—Temporary retirement.

HITHERTO we have been considering cases, for the most part, of men driven from employ by the ill-success of French enterprise in the Carnatic. Another of these was Claude Martin, whose name has been preserved from oblivion by the noble foundations that still bear his name in Lucknow, Calcutta, and Lyons, his native city. Martin never had an opportunity of achieving warlike honours after leaving the French service, which he did about 1762. It is true that he entered the army of the victorious English Company, in which he was allowed to rank until he ultimately reached the titular position of Major-General. But his life was henceforth passed at Lucknow, whither he had been sent on special duty, and where he devoted himself to the arts and crafts, making guns and small-arms for the Nawab, and embarking in successful speculations connected with indigo and other local produce. This quiet career hardly entitles Martin to a place in our list of Military Adventurers; yet so useful a life deserves a passing tribute. He continued his labours for a third of a century, and died in 1800, leaving the bulk of his property to purposes of education in the various places above named. His life was thus described by a contemporaneous observer in 1789:—

“Colonel Martin is a man desirous of all kinds of knowledge; and, although he is at the head of a large

property which he owes only to his own industry, he works whole days together at all the arts that concern watchmaking and gunsmith's work with as much bodily labour as if he had his bread to earn by it. As an architect—and he is everything—he has built himself at Lucknow a strong, elegant house." It is said that the Nawab was so delighted with this building, which was known as "Constantia," that he offered to buy it for a sum equivalent to a million sterling. But the General—who had other ends in view—declined the offer, of which the only result was to suggest a singular expedient to prevent the appropriation of the property after his death. A Muslim ruler might violate the rights of a deceased owner, but he would probably respect a tomb. With keen perception of this feature of Oriental character; the General bequeathed the building to the school he intended to found—still known as "La Martinière"—ordering, at the same time, that his body should be interred in one of the ground-floor apartments; and there his remains are still believed to lie, in a plain sarcophagus of marble, though disturbed by rebels in 1857.

This is a singular instance of a victory of peace which is pleasant to contemplate among the more turbulent scenes with which our story is chiefly occupied.

A friend and partner of Martin's, who also did good with a great fortune, now demands attention. In the brief notice of Médoc we have had to refer to the little war between Sindhiā and the Rana of Gohad; this was originally waged for the possession of Gwalior; but that place was captured by a British expedition, under Major Popham, in 1780, handed over to the Rana of Gohad, and left to be recaptured by Sindhiā, in pursuance of the negotiations which began in the following year, and ended in the Treaty of Salbai in 1782. Not content with this, the Maratha chief next aspired to deprive the Rana of Gohad itself; and while engaged in this attempt, discovered, among the stolen property of a European

traveller, a detailed plan of much ability intended to be submitted to the Rana for the purpose of enabling him to raise the siege. He found that the traveller was named Benoit Boigne, who was seeking for employment among his—Sindhia's—enemies; and, having a sort of tacit understanding with Warren Hastings, the British Governor-General, with whose passport the foreigner was travelling, he wrote to Hastings and procured M. Boigne's recall. The circumstances which led to these events—destined as they were to have most important consequences—deserve a brief record.

Benoit Boigne was the son of a respectable burgess of Chambéry in Savoy, born in, or about, 1750, and destined for the profession of arms. While still very young he entered the French service, being posted as an Ensign to the regiment of Lord Clare, in the Irish Brigade, then under the command of Colonel Leigh. It was, doubtless, in that period of his life that he laid the foundation of his knowledge of the English language. France at that time had no work for her soldiers, and after a few years of garrison life the young Savoyard accompanied his corps to Mauritius, returning to France in 1773. Impatient of the want of action and promotion in the then existing state of the service, he took furlough; and, providing himself with a letter of introduction from the Marquis d'Aigueblanche, repaired to the camp of the Russian Admiral Orloff, then leading the forces of Catherine II. in a war against the Ottoman Empire. Appointed Captain in a regiment of Greeks, he was captured by the Turks during the siege of Tenedos, and kept in confinement at Scio until the peace of Kuchuk Kainarji, in June, 1774.

Obtaining his liberation under this treaty, Boigne repaired to St. Petersburg, where he was presented to the Empress, and made upon that able but sentimental sovereign the impression natural to a skilful soldier who was also a fine young man. Catherine engaged Captain

Boigne to take a journey in her interest to the East, and on his way through Southern Russia he had the fortune to fall in with the eldest son of the Duke of Northumberland, who gave him some letters of introduction. Proceeding to Aleppo, the young officer joined the Bassora caravan, with which he hoped to visit Persia ; but, after reaching Baghdad, the party were stopped by the Persian officials, that kingdom being then at war with Turkey. Nothing daunted, Boigne retraced his steps and proceeded to Alexandria ; and, after some further adventures in Egypt, decided on visiting India, took ship at Suez, and in due course landed at Madras. Here Lord Percy's letters befriended him, and in the beginning of 1778 he was appointed to a vacant commission in the 6th regiment of Native Infantry, having thus held a commission in the service of three several nations before he was thirty years old.

The Government of Fort St. George (Madras) was at this period in sore straits, neither civil chiefs nor military possessing the capacity needed to bring their afflictions to a happy issue ; the Governor was Mr. Whitehill, who had to be removed from office by Warren Hastings ; the Commander of the Forces was Sir Hector Munro, who had won the battle of Buxar fifteen years before, but to whom years had brought more of discretion than of valour. Haidar Ali, the Muslim usurper of Mysor, had nursed his grievances against the Presidency until he could contain them no more, and his son, Tippu Sahib, exceeded him in malignity, if not in military genius. Two Members of Council went in succession to ask for peace, each in turn to be driven with contumely from the enemy's camp ; the disinterested pleadings of the missionary Swartz were no more successful. In June, 1780, the Mysoreans burst like a flood into the Carnatic lowlands with 90,000 troops of all arms and a number of French officers. Of all the wars of modern times in India none has had more sympathy from the popular

side ; public prayers were everywhere offered for the success of Haidar and his son ; the commissariat was ably administered by a wealthy Brahman. The Madras rulers could oppose to the invaders only a force of about 5,200 men assembled at the Mount under Munro, and a smaller body under Colonel Baillie, in the "Northern Circars," which they ordered down to join the Commander-in-Chief, who was marching towards Conjeveram. It is well known that, after delays for which he was not perhaps entirely answerable, the latter did not arrive at his destination till near the end of August, while Baillie never reached it at all, being cut up by Tippu without any attempt at relief from headquarters' camp, where the firing had been audible for hours. The lives of the surviving British officers were spared on the strong representations of the Frenchmen present, but they were destined to a long and painful captivity. The regiment to which our Savoyard adventurer belonged was involved in this catastrophe, and subsequent history would have been seriously affected had he not been previously detached on escort duty with two companies, and so escaped the fate of his comrades.

But he had seen enough of Madras imbecility, and soon after resigned his commission, setting up at the Presidency as a fencing-master. After a few months of this unpromising life, our adventurer appears to have remembered his commission from the Czarina, or his own wish to explore the then mysterious regions of Central Asia. A new Governor had come out to Madras in the shape of Lord Macartney, who had also seen Russia and known what it was to be a prisoner of war. To this nobleman our adventurer addressed himself for aid, and not in vain. Struck, perhaps, by sympathetic feelings, he dismissed Boigne with a letter for Warren Hastings, armed with which the Savoyard reached Calcutta in the beginning of 1783.

His military career now seemed closed : whatever

technical knowledge he may have acquired, it had brought him neither glory nor experience of war on a serious scale ; and not even the sagacious ruler to whom he now presented himself could have seen that he had before him a man destined to be a great soldier in the same sense as Marshal de Saxe, or Frederick called "the Great."

Mr. Hastings, understanding that the man before him was undertaking the arduous task of travelling to Russia by way of Persia and Turkistan, readily gave what help lay in his power, supplying letters which might be useful credentials, as he had already done for Bogle when visiting Thibet. Thus provided, the traveller made his way up the country, his first halt being at Lucknow. Here he found affairs in a very different condition from what had been the case when Kāsim and Sombre went there eighteen or nineteen years before. The bold Nawab-Vazir of those days had passed away, and his place had not been filled up ; his son, Asaf-ud-daulah, bore, indeed, the same titles, but was in effect little more than a stipendiary, or mediatised prince, secured by British support and spending on frivolous amusement the money extorted from defenceless subjects. Martin was there, leading the life of busy curiosity described in a quotation given above ; and Major Middleton, the Governor-General's Agent, doing honour to his employer's credentials, paid the traveller all due attention. Presented to the Nawab, he was favoured with a dress of honour and a gift of 4,000 rupees, and at Lucknow he passed the hot season, studying Persian and making friends.

Meanwhile the Western horizon was clouding over, and the Moghal Empire was relapsing into the decrepitude from which the integrity and courage of Mirza Najaf had given a momentary relief. That able public servant had died in April, 1782, leaving his estate and his office to be objects of contention between Mirza Shafi, his nephew,

and a favourite follower called Afrasyāb Khan. The Empire rapidly became disintegrated and anarchy was setting in with its worst train of consequences.

"So reduced," says an eye-witness of those times, "was the actual number of human beings, and so utterly cowed their spirit, that the few villages that continued to exist at great intervals had scarcely any communication with one another; and so great was the increase of beasts of prey that what little communication remained was often cut off by a single tiger known to haunt the road." ¹

Yet the sovereignty of this afflicted region long continued to be a matter of veneration and its service to be sought with eager competition. To understand all the crimes and intrigues that went on over the heads of the unhappy people of Upper India would require reference to a whole literature; we must here be content with what relates to the subject with which our narrative is immediately concerned. Outside the Moghal struggle a wary Maratha was keenly watching; and while the palace and person of the imbecile Emperor were being contested by the courtiers, Sindhia was biding his time. Towards the end of 1783, Mirza Shafi came back from a small foray, bringing with him a Persian leader of mercenaries named Mohammed Beg Hamadāni, to whom was entrusted the governorship of Agra. The Savoyard adventurer also came up at the same time from Lucknow with an introduction to the Mirza, but was prevented from using it by the death of his intended patron, who was just then pistolled by his associate, Mohammed Beg. Boigne next turned to the British Agent in Sindhia's camp, Mr. Anderson, whom he found in attendance on the Maratha chief before the walls of Gohad. From him also he failed to obtain assistance. Being on terms of acquaintance with a Scot, named Sangster, who was in charge of the gun foundry of the besieged Rana, he next

¹ *Memoirs of Jas Skinner*, by Baillie Fraser.

opened a correspondence with this person, in the hope of being engaged by the Rana ; and this led to his being summoned to Calcutta by Warren Hastings, as already stated.

The situation was grave. Boigne must have been aware that, while on the one hand the British authorities were anxious to prop up the decadent Empire, they were on the other hand most reluctant to break with Sindhia, whom Hastings had for some time regarded as the seeming man. For his own part, as an independent traveller, he had a perfect right to disregard the mandate of the British ruler ; and yet, at the same time, considerations of prudence and of gratitude alike forbade any action on his part which might add to the embarrassments of the Governor-General. Boigne took the wise course of returning to Calcutta, at whatever cost in money and disappointment ; and he joined the camp of Mr. Hastings, whom he found marching for the last time to Lucknow, and from whom he once more sought aid.

This prompt obedience was welcome to the much-vexed Governor-General who was winding up his complicated and troublesome affairs preparatory to leaving India for good, and was willing to befriend a man who could be so amenable. Taking Boigne as far as Lucknow, he once more dismissed him with credentials ; and the traveller proceeded to Jaipur, where he was well received by the Maharaja, who, nevertheless, to his own great detriment, declined his offer of service. By that time a British Mission had at last appeared at Dehli under Major Browne, and to him Boigne had recourse, on the recommendation of the departing Governor-General. Browne presented the wanderer to the Emperor ; but the latter, in his forlorn condition, would take no initiative, and contented himself with a recommendation to Sindhia, by this time completely successful at Gohad, and cantoned at Mathra with an eye to further operations.

What was the attraction between these two able and ambitious men we can only guess. Sindhia, as we have already seen, had a warm appreciation of European warfare, and Boigne would probably discover this and adapt his persuasions to the foregone conclusion. By a strange coincidence he now obtained—after all the toils and disappointments of his past years—the opening that he had so long been seeking from the very chief whose rising star he had once refused to recognise. He was engaged by Sindhia to organise a force of two battalions of infantry, with a salary of Rs. 1,000 *per mensem* for himself and pay for 1,700 men and officers at an average rate of Rs. 8 a head, to be appointed at his discretion. It was but a humble beginning, but it was all that he could obtain—or, perhaps, expect—to start with.

Afrasyāb, the last Moghal obstacle to the ambitious projects of Sindhia, was removed by assassination in October, 1784, in camp before Agra, where Mohammed Beg was holding out for terms. All the chiefs present at once repaired to the tent of Sindhia and unanimously voted him to supreme power at an informal durbar. He then repaired to Dehli, leaving the recalcitrant Beg in temporary occupation of the Agra fort. On arriving at Court, he obtained a patent as Prime Minister, with a grant of the Provinces of Dehli and Agra for the support of his army, contingent only on his making a monthly provision for the Emperor's personal expenses and privy purse.

Meanwhile Boigne had accompanied a body of troops detached for the pacification of Bundelkhand, whence he returned in the spring of 1785. On the 27th of March the fort of Agra was surrendered by Mohammed Beg, who was pardoned and taken into the Imperial service; the palace of Dehli was guarded by a choice body of infantry, and Sindhia retired to his favourite cantonment of Mathrā, where he remained until the following spring.

There proved, however, to be much left for Sindhia to do before he could finally establish his position, and M. Boigne, in particular, found himself in difficulties that might have daunted many a hopeful spirit and did actually produce even in him a state of despondency which almost wrecked his career. The Muslim nobles were by no means reconciled to the rule of one whom they regarded as a Hindu upstart ; and when, in straits for money, Sindhia took measures for overhauling the titles of their holdings, they began to stir under the fear of confiscation. Mohammed Beg took the lead in these discontents, and on the outbreak of active hostility among the chiefs of Rajputāna, went over to them with the bulk of his troops. In a great battle at Lalsaut, about forty miles from Jaipur, the Beg was killed ; but his place was taken by his nephew, Ismail Beg, soon to prove one of the boldest leaders of heavy horse then in the country. The new levies were led in this action by their Savoyard Colonel, but they were not of sufficient strength to do more than protect the retreat. Sindhia was now in a perilous way, cut off from his force in Agra—which was promptly invested—and menaced in his rear by an army of 100,000 brave Rājputs, who were, fortunately, too indolent to follow him with due promptitude. Throwing himself into the almost impregnable fortress of the Jats at Bhurtpur, Sindhia wrote to Poona for the help of a Maratha army, and took steps for the augmentation of his regular forces under Colonel Boigne.

Having at last digested their banquet of victory, the Rājputs advanced to renew the attack on Sindhia. Surprising one of his divisions under a Maratha General, Ambaji Inglia, they put it to flight, and compelled Sindhia to seek shelter in the fort of Gwalior, at the same time that Ismail Beg, before Agra, was reinforced by Ghulām Kādar, the chief of Sahāranpur, at the head of the Duāb. Sindhia, having rallied his forces, sent the bulk of them, with the new levies, to raise the siege of

Agra ; but they were once more beaten by the Muslim and driven back on Bhurtpur. Reinforced from Poona, he resumed the offensive ; and, in a battle fought near Fatehpur Sikri, the new levies resisted the Moghal cavalry to such effect that the siege of Agra was at last raised, and the Marathas entered the fort which had been the bone of this obstinate contention.

But the Savoyard commander was by no means satisfied. Though he afterwards admitted that this time of trial had been the hour of Sindhia's moral greatness, Boigne did not yet fully believe in that chief ; and he was further disappointed by the smallness of his force, the subordination of his standing and the limits of the confidence reposed in him generally. Accordingly, he took advantage of the temporary lull, obtained leave *sine die*, and repaired to his friend, Colonel Martin, at Lucknow, with whom he entered into partnership in business pursuits. The Maratha chief and the European soldier had parted with reciprocal expressions of good will ; Sindhia returned to his Mathra cantonment, and the quondam Colonel laid down his sword and devoted himself to the manufacture of indigo.

CHAPTER IV

Ghulām Kādar and Ismail Beg—a Palace Tragedy.

AMONG the men who made havoc in Hindustan during the latter half of the eighteenth century should be noticed the two whose names stand at the head of this chapter. Of these, the one was of Persian extraction, whose uncle, Mohammed Beg, had been a leader of mercenaries, killed at the battle of Lalsaut at the end of May, 1787; the other being the son of a restless and unscrupulous Pathan, or Rohila, named Zalita Khan, whom he had lately succeeded in a small chieftainship in the Upper Duāb. It will be convenient in future to know the latter as the Rohila Nawab, and to bear in mind that he was a young man of strong passions, if not disordered intellect; the Beg, on the other hand, being little more than an intrepid soldier, famous in his time as a leader of heavy cavalry.

Towards the end of the rainy season of 1787 the two leaders, having for the time dispersed the Marathas, advanced upon Dehli. Sindhia, being for the moment powerless to oppose them, retired to his own country to await such reinforcements as the Poona Government might send him, and the confederate leaders had a clear field for their operations. Their object appears to have been to drive back the Mārathas and restore the power of Islam in the administration of such provinces as still acknowledged the Imperial sway. The Beg covering Agra and Mathra with a containing force, his associate

advanced on Dehli, whence he expelled the small Maratha garrison. By the agency of the comptroller of the household, the Rohila chief was introduced into the Emperor's Durbar, where he applied for the office of Amir-ul-Umra, or Premier, taking up his quarters in the apartments of the palace reserved for the holder of that office. But Begum Sombre presently arriving with her brigade under European officers, he retired across the river, and remained for some time quiet in his camp at Shāhdara.

It will be well at this point to take a hasty glance at the scene of the events which followed. The royal residence has suffered since then both from war and from the requirements of British occupations, but enough remains to enable us to trace the main features. The immediate frontage consisted of a large courtyard, at one end of which the monarch sat for the transaction of business. In the rear is a smaller enclosure leading to the Diwani Khas, or Privy Council Chamber, which is walled with beautifully painted stucco, surmounted with a cornice on which is still to be seen in golden letters the famous inscription familiar to readers of *Lalla Rookh*:

"If there be an Elysium on earth,
It is this, it is this, it is this."

But the Elysium had already been desecrated; the gorgeous peacock throne with its priceless jewellery had been carried away by the Persians, and the monarch of the dwindled Moghal Empire was reduced to such a substitute as could be provided by a shattered and tattered bedstead, on which he received his privileged visitors.

Into this scene of splendid ruin the Rohila Nawab forced his way; but his further intrusion was arrested by the return of the Begum Sombre, accompanied by a Maratha officer named Ambagi. As these were supported by a respectable force, the Rohila consented to a

compromise, by which he obtained the coveted post ; and all the troops on both sides were withdrawn, the Shah being left to the protection of a body of horsemen whom he raised for the purpose by the help of funds obtained by the melting of his plate. The Rohila then departed to join the Beg, who was besieging the fort at Agra, which was held by a strong Maratha garrison. At the end of the cold weather, about March, 1788, Sindhia awoke from his apparent apathy, having received reinforcements from the Deccan, and came across the Clambal at Dholpur. The Muslim confederates broke up front before Agra, and gave him battle at Chaksana, eleven miles from Bhurtpur, on the 24th of April. General de Boigne was present, but the army was not commanded by him, but by the promoted water-carrier Rána Khán, who had saved the chief's life in the retreat from Panipat, in 1761. The Muslim cavalry were handled with spirit ; three of the regular battalions deserted the Marathas in the midst of the action ; the Jat horse proved worthless.

The day being lost, Rána Khán retired towards Gwalior, and the Rohila Nawáb returned to his own country, which was threatened on the northward side by an incursion of the Sikhs. In repelling this he was successful, the incursion having been driven back, though it took more than two generations for the district of Sahāranpur to recover in some measure from the effect of the devastation. The Rohila and the Beg once more joined their forces, and, leaving a containing force before Agra, marched with the remainder of their troops to the capital, which they reached at the beginning of the hot season, the Shah having at the same time returned from a somewhat futile expedition in which he had endeavoured to procure the adhesion of the Rajput Princes.

Sindhia, having received fresh reinforcements from the Deccan, was enabled to raise the siege of Agra ; Ismail Beg was driven off after an encounter near the old

palace of Fatehpur Sikri. He crossed the Jumna and, being joined by Ghulām Kādar, went off in his company to Dehli. Leaving Lakwa Dada, one of his best Maratha officers, in charge of Agra, Sindhia fell back upon his favourite cantonment of Māthrà, sending a small contingent to protect the Emperor at Dehli. The Muslim leaders encamped at Shāhdara. Scarcity prevailed in the camp. At the same time they intrigued with the Shah's officers with such effect that the Moghal portion of the garrison came over to them ; and Himmat, the leader of the Gosains, withdrew his force. Seeing the Emperor thus deserted, the confederates crossed the river, entered Dehli, and took possession of the citadel and the palace. At the beginning of the monsoon, 1788, they separated, the Beg encamping in the old city to the south of the capital, while the Rohila placed his men in the suburb of Dariaoganj, while he himself returned to his old quarters in the palace. Their plan appears to have been to obtain possession of the administration, while their troops protected them from molestation from the Marathas, and to this must be added the peculiar design of the Rohila, who was bent on discovering some hidden treasure which he imagined to have been concealed in the royal precincts.

From the 29th of July to the 10th of August, he occupied himself in digging up the floors, but failed to find the desired booty. He then turned to personal ill-usage of the Shah and his family, the ladies being turned out of the seclusion in which their lives had been spent and driven forth with violence into the unfamiliar dangers of the streets. On the last-mentioned day he caused the fallen Emperor to be brought before him as he sat on the dismantled throne, and when the old man once more declared—what was no matter of doubt—that there was no such treasure in existence, he leapt from the throne, threw his sovereign on the ground, and blinded him with his own dagger, assisted by his Rohila followers.

The unfortunate Shah was then removed to a part of the palace reserved for political prisoners, and a helpless prince was raised to the titular sovereignty, while the intruding Rohila made himself master of the whole place, even sitting on the throne and puffing tobacco smoke into the face of his puppet. But his punishment was approaching. The honest *sabreur* who had hitherto guarded the left rear of the position now abandoned his caitiff comrade, and with the Beg's departure the Marathas from Agra and Mathra began to close in. At length, on the 7th September, after weeks of unlicensed revel, only interrupted by cruelty and by the deaths of many members of the family from starvation, the Rohila moved his men across the Jumna as an escort for his approaching departure. Abandoned by his associate, the Rohila was no longer in a frame of mind to confront Rána Khán and Boigne's trained battalions, and on the 11th October he set fire to the palace and retired to his camp, fording the river on an elephant. The attempted arson failed; Rána Khán and his advance guard arrived in time to extinguish the conflagration and deliver the Shah and the remnant of his unfortunate family. Having imprisoned the puppet-King and the treacherous chamberlain, to whom so much of the Rohila's evil conduct was attributable, Rána Khán marched in pursuit of the Rohila, who had already decamped and taken refuge in the fort of Meerut, which lay directly on the road to his own country. Here he maintained a spirited defence for some nine weeks; courage of the soldier sort was not wanting in his otherwise worthless character. But he must now have perceived that the game was lost, and that his only hope lay in immediate flight to the Sikh country, where his brother had already found refuge. Accordingly, on the shortest night of the year, he secretly departed by one of those postern doors which are usually found in Indian fortresses, mounted on a horse in whose saddlebags

were stuffed the crown jewels which he had carried away from Dehli. Falling into a pit in the darkness, he was captured by some villagers and handed over to Rána Kháp. By Sindhia's orders he was slain by tortures that lasted several days, and his mangled body was sent to Dehli and laid before his sightless victim. The jewels were found by one of Boigne's officers, who at once left the service and probably took them back to France.

The crimes of the Rohila Nawab were a combination of treason, greed, and cruelty, but their peculiar atrocity shocked the conscience of an age that was not squeamish. When he brutally asked the Shah, whom he had blinded, what he was looking at, the sufferer replied, "Nothing but the word of God between me and thee," for the miscreant had sworn on the Koran to protect and serve his helpless sovereign. In addition to this black treason, the Nawab had also caused the death of many innocent victims, and had finally left the survivors to perish in the flames that he had kindled before his flight. Various reasons were suggested for these atrocities. It was said that when the restless Zalita went into rebellion eleven years earlier he left his family in one of its strongholds from which he himself had fled, and that his son, whose fate we have been describing, had been taken into the royal household when the fort was captured. And the tale went on to say that the boy had suffered mutilation to fit him for the office of a zenana page. For such an injury it was supposed he had ever sought the opportunity of a cruel revenge. Another suggestion was that his understanding was permanently disarranged: and in support of this some singular incidents have been recorded. One day he sent for the young people of the royal family and caused them to dance before him; then, reclining on the throne, he pretended to go to sleep, rising presently to rebuke them for their cowardice in not attempting his life when he appeared to lie at their mercy. At another time he sought to palliate his offences

by attributing them to supernatural inspiration. As he was advancing from Agra that summer he went to rest during the heat of the day in a garden by the wayside, and had a vision, he said, of an angel, who smote him on the breast, saying : " Arise ! go to Dehli and possess thyself of the palace." The Shah, however, looked upon the conduct of the Rohila as a mere outbreak of cruel treachery, and in the poetical lament with which he relieved the darkness of his captivity compared the young Rohila to " a serpent who had stung the bosom where he had been fostered." *

The fate of Ismail Beg was more tardy and less terrible than that of his infamous associate. When he returned from Dehli he did so under a temporary truce with Sindhia's General, Rána Khán ; but he had not the spirit of a subordinate, and never re-entered the Maratha's service in which he had been engaged up to the time of his uncle's death. For some twenty months more he continued his adventurous career after the fashion of a mediæval *condottiere*, rallying to his standard such Moghal cavaliers as might be wandering about the country in search of employment : and with these he passed into the service of any malcontent prince who might be disposed to refuse payment of tribute to the now dominant Marathás. Without country, cause, or conviction, his standard of duty consisted in fighting bravely for any chief by whom he might be for the moment engaged, and he represented the last successful attempt of the antiquated system of warfare : with flare of trumpet and roll of kettledrums the Beg and his men charged in full armour upon the trained battalions with which it was the policy of Sindhia to fill his army ; but the fiery cavaliers had to reel back unsuccessful, while many an empty saddle told of the cool and precise musketry of their opponents. Before long the inevitable

* A literal prose translation of this lament will be found in *The Fall of the Moghal Empire*, third edition, London, 1887, pp. 192-3.

end came ; foiled in all his attempts, the Beg took refuge in the fort of Kanaund, just then held by the widowed sister of his late associate, Ghulām Kādar. The Rohila Mādy had been holding out against the Marathas until Perron was sent against her fort with a siege train. Aided by the Beg, she conducted the defence with spirit, till she was killed in an assault. Finding the garrison indisposed to hold out any longer, and trusting to the word of a European, the Beg surrendered on the promise of his life, and was conveyed as a prisoner to Agra. On the highest point of the fort there, an old house was long pointed out as having been built or inhabited by a Jat named Dan Shah ; and in this building Ismail passed the remainder of his life, which was, however, not of long duration. Although he does not appear to have been treated with any peculiar harshness, yet the confinement and dulness must have been very oppressive to one long habituated to a stirring life. He was still living in 1794, and was mentioned by Captain Francklin, a writer of those days, as a dangerous man. The exact date of his death is not known, but it took place while he was yet a captive.

The doings of these leaders had not the same influence on the state of the country as those of one or two European contemporaries ; they were rather birds of darkness than harbingers of dawn. But they are deserving of notice as illustrating the condition to which the land had been reduced by anarchy ; and the people, harassed by war and famine, must have been deprived of all those things which render the life of the poor endurable. The accounts of the state of the country at the time with which we are dealing are derived from various sources. The best known English writers are Dow and Francklin, but their statements are fully endorsed by good native contemporaries. The Eastern horizon was indeed beginning to show signs of the departure of darkness ; the British power in Bihār and

Bengal, if it did not bring immediate prosperity, was producing the peace and calm which are prosperity's best foundation. But in the vast region locally known as Hindustan, stretching from Allahabad to Karnal and from the Vindhya to the southern slopes of the Himalayas, society was completely paralysed, and the occupations of life were almost at a standstill. The drums and 'tramlings of Moghal and Maratha were by no means the only molestation of the afflicted world. Roads had ceased to exist ; towns were deserted ; the intercourse between adjoining villages was made difficult by the prowlings of tigers and wild elephants ; while the demoralised peasantry, not knowing who would reap their crops, reduced the labours of cultivation to the lowest level necessary for the production of food for their families. Money was buried underground ; no fresh supplies of treasure were to be expected ; and whenever the periodical rains failed, production ceased, and many thousands of people perished from starvation. This terrible state of things drew to a close with the events of 1788. The only man capable of restoring order was Sindhia, and the palace revolution narrated in these pages cleared the ground for Sindhia's accession to power. Having restored the blinded Shah to titular sovereignty, the great Maratha became the actual director of administration, and under the European officers whom he employed, peace and order returned to the afflicted land. Forty or fifty years ago old men still spoke regretfully of those halcyon days.

The introduction of British rule, with its sure and inflexible methods, had for some time the effect, however unintentional, of interrupting this welfare and producing a contrast. When land became a complete security for debt, and when ancestral acres were brought to the hammer for defaults of Government dues, it was not to be wondered at if the people sighed for the days of Sindhia and his French subordinates. Better times

have since ensued ; the reign of law has been tempered by sympathetic moderation. But perhaps even now there may be yet something to be learned from the records of a ruder administration more agreeable to the habits of a simple rural community.¹

¹ For further particulars refer to *Sindha "Rulers of India" Series*, Oxford, 1895.

CHAPTER V

Revolution at Dehli—Boigne is recalled by Sindhia—The New Model Army and campaign in Rajputāna—Boigne at Ajmir, Jaipur, and Alwar—Administration at Aligurh—He retires in ill-health, and ultimately returns to Europe—His work at Chambéry, and death.

THE events of 1788 mark the close of a period. Nominally, indeed, no change may have been at first evident. The Shah continued to exercise as much sovereignty as was possible for a blind man; for it is a remarkable instance of the tenacity of Oriental ideas that this apparently hollow semblance still imposed on men's minds. Boigne himself subsequently wrote of this period that "the respect for the race of Timur reigned so strongly that, although the whole of India had withdrawn itself from the Imperial authority, not a prince within its borders claimed sovereign rights; Sindhia shared the feelings, and Shah Alam was always seated on the Moghal throne, while all was done in his name."

Such as this sovereignty may have been, it was the intention of the Maratha chief to shape it to his own use and profit. Though, constitutionally, nothing but a foreigner of distinction called in to administer a disordered State, he was, practically, mayor of the palace, plenipotentiary vicegerent of the Empire, and absolute master of the civil and military resources thereof. In this position he was beset on all sides. At Poonā—notwithstanding a certain readiness to help shown in the late war—he was jealously watched by Nana Farnavis,



GENERAL COUNT DE BOIGNE

(1750-1830.)

the minister of the Peshwa. In Hindustan, although he had got rid of most of his Muslim rivals, he had still to be on guard against Ismail Beg and Najaf Kuli. Most of all had he to apprehend trouble from the Princes of Rajputana, Jaipur, and the rest; those chieftains—if they could only form a compact and energetic union—could assail his unfinished army with overwhelming force.

The first thing for an able and resolute man so situated was evidently to augment and consolidate his military power; and, as a step in that direction, he forthwith sent a representative to Lucknow to invite the return of his Savoyard friend, to whom he offered something like a blank-cheque, in effect the supreme command and free discretion. An offer of renewed employment on these terms Boigne could not refuse. Therefore, having, like a prudent man as he was, wound up his affairs at Lucknow, he left some of his investments in Martín's hands and placed others with good Calcutta firms, proceeding to Mathra about the end of 1789 and at once addressing his whole attention to military reform.

The regulars whom Boigne had formerly raised had become demoralised since his temporary retirement, and their Colonel—a Frenchman of bad character—had deserted with eight months' pay due to the officers and men—a sum equivalent to over £10,000 sterling. The soldiers clamoured for their arrears; Sindhia, on the other hand, was short of temper and disposed to charge the battalions with artillery and horse. The new commander, objecting to this extreme measure, was allowed to deal with the case at his own discretion; and accordingly, by a mixture of threat and promise, prevailed on the men to pile arms and parade bare-handed. They were then formally discharged, half their arrears paid up, and new engagements made with them on altered terms, the officers who had fomented the late ill-conduct being cashiered. Recruiting on a large scale was set on foot in

regions where the best material was available ; European officers and artillerists were invited, and strong brigades formed. Each brigade was to comprise 4,000 regular infantry (armed with flint muskets and with bayonets), with at least two Christian commissioned officers in each of the battalions ; there were to be thirty-six field guns, with a European sergeant-major and five European gunners to each battery ; there was also a small siege-train and a body of horse to protect the guns. This force—organised against all Oriental principles—was destined to a short but glorious career, and finally (being augmented by new brigades added from time to time) attained the respectable strength of 68 battalions, 427 guns, and 40,000 horse. Some notice of its later service and ultimate dissolution will be found on a further page.

For the present General de Boigne was at the head of a choice body of troops, chiefly formed of some 16,000 infantry : he was allowed Rs. 10,000 a month for his own pay ; and the little army, secure of good treatment, followed its honourable chief under the white cross of Savoy. Lands round Aligurh were assigned for the pay of the officers and men, a promise being recorded that a gratuity should be bestowed on those who were wounded in action, with full pay all the time that they should be in hospital. Invalids were to have pensions on retirement.

Having done all that humanity and wisdom could suggest, the General took the field early in 1790 at the head of his New Model. Some hammering under fire might still be needed, but the steel head was at last fixed firmly on the bamboo lance, as opportunity was soon to show. The tempest that Sindhia had foreseen when he sent his unconditional succours to Boigne at Lucknow was gathering in the south-west, where Ismail's new loyalty was giving way under the combined temptation of his own restless character and the attitude of the Afghans

who were beginning to move on the Punjab under Timur Shah, son of their famous leader, Ahmad the Abdālī. Ismail had been put in charge of a district in the Mewāt country between Dehli and the homes of the Rājputs; and it was ostensibly as an ally of these Princes that he now adopted a hostile attitude. No sooner had he raised his standard than disbanded soldiers, the *débris* of the old-fashioned armies, flocked to take service; and it was not long before the mediæval warfare of mounted men-at-arms was to be opposed to artillery and musketry, and squares with flickering bayonet points and flashing fire.

Pending the coming of the Afghans, the Rajas of Jaipur and Jodhpur hurried to the aid of their Muslim ally; and Sindhia sent General de Boigne's legion, with a Maratha force, under two commanders of that race, with orders to prevent the junction, at the same time employing a mixture of threat and promise to the Rajas. Early in May, 1790, the army reached Gwalior, about six weeks after being mobilised at Māthra. The light-armed Maratha horsemen sent out as scouts brought news, on the 10th, that Ismail was strongly entrenched at a place called Pātan, about half-way between Gwalior and Ujain. The Rājputs were at hand, when the Imperial army arrived on the 25th and began to invest the place; but Sindhia's intrigues had already begun to sow mistrust between them and the Beg, and the Rajas took no part in the operations. Had they attacked the rear of the assailants and taken them between two fires, the result might have been different; but with Sindhia the head was always ready to lighten the labour of the hand, and steel was not used when the end could be obtained by silver. Disappointed by his allies and impatient at the confinement and scarcity of the entrenchment, the Beg broke forth on June 19th. With trumpets and kettledrums sounding, clad in chain-mail or plate-armour, the Beg's heavy cavalry charged down, re-

peatedly breaking the Marathas, and sabring Boigne's gunners at their posts. But the General and his officers kept their heads; the new infantry, reviving the ancient phalanx, resisted all attempts to ride them down with bristling bayonets and well-nourished fire. As the baffled, horsemen retired, the General seized the critical moment to advance in line. Placing himself at the head of one of his battalions, he led his men into the entrenchment. There were three lines of defence: the first was carried with the impulse of the advance; the second held out obstinately and did not fall till 8 p.m.; the third yielded an hour later; then the mercenaries ceased their resistance, and the Beg galloped, almost alone, in the direction of Jaipur, where, for a while, he found a grudging refuge. He had lost all his stock-in-trade, one hundred guns, fifty elephants, two hundred colours, and all his baggage; on the following day a great body of his horsemen came over and were taken into the Imperial service. After three days of open trenches the town was taken, and thus the small disciplined force—with but scant aid from the irregulars under Maratha leaders—had broken down the last remnants of the cause of Moghal anarchy. Boigne—who was his own war correspondent—wrote a letter to a Calcutta newspaper in which he estimated the Beg's cavalry at 5,000, and attributed the result of the action to the firmness of his regular battalions, of whom he had with him about 10,000 bayonets, supported by several field-batteries, whose fire preceded his advance. He estimates the loss of his regulars at 592 killed and wounded. He says of himself: "I was on horseback, encouraging our men; thank God, I have realised all the sanguine expectations of Sindhia; the officers in general behaved well; to them I am a great deal indebted for the fortune of the day."

The indolence of the Rājputs has already been noticed, and we have seen how adroitly Sindhia—playing on that

and other of their weaknesses—had neutralised their action at a time when it might have done him much mischief. But there was a leading man among them—old Bijai Singh, Maharaja of Mārwar, or Jodhpur—who had a long-standing feud with Sindhia, which he now attempted to make good. The Jaipur Raja Pārtab Singh had given offence to the Maratha Minister by harbouring Ismail Beg; and Bijai Singh acted on his fears to persuade him into a new combination. But when Sindhia, flushed with his late success, had sent a force into the Jaipur country, though it was only 7,000 strong, that body proved enough to keep the Raja in check; the Beg was persuaded to go off to Multan, and the Savoyard General, having now only Jodhpur to deal with, entered the intervening lands of Ajmir, and captured the town of that name on August 22. Here he received a message from Bijai Singh complimenting him handsomely upon his victory at Pātan, and offering him the town and district of Ajmir as a bribe to induce him to leave the cause of Sindhia and embrace that of the Rājputs. To an ordinary mercenary the proposal might have been temptation; but the General was not a man to imitate the dog in the fable. With grim pleasantry he made answer that his master had already given him both Jodhpur and Jaipur; why should he be content with nothing but Ajmir? About fifteen days later, intelligence arrived that Bijai Singh was advancing to the relief of Tāragarh, the lofty fortress of Ajmir, which the imperialists had invested. Leaving a small force to maintain the blockade of the hill, the General hastened to meet the Jodhpur army, and presently learned that they had encamped under the protecting walls of Mairta, a town some 80 miles north-east of Ajmir. On the evening of September 7 he reconnoitred the position and found the Rāthors—to which great class the Raja and his subjects belonged—strongly entrenched in front of the town, whose walls gave complete cover to the rear

of the camp. The ground rose in front, and the strength of the place forbade a rash attack. Gopal Rao, the Maratha General, did indeed urge an immediate onslaught; but Boigne said: "No; the hour is late, the men are tired: let them have a good meal and go to sleep; there will be time enough in the morning."

Profiting by the wise and kindly thought, the imperialists rested that night, while the Rāthors, on their side, spent the hours in rude and loud festivity. In the grey of the morning—when all at last had fallen into the silence of satiety—a French colonel, named Rohan, took out three battalions and crept up the slope, intending to surprise the Rāthors as they lay plunged in half-drunken sleep. But his approach was perceived, and a sufficient number of the garrison were ready to drive out Rohan with loss. Trumpets sounded, the Rāthor horsemen threw on their armour and vaulted to their saddles; pouring out of the camp with reckless ardour, they fell upon the Maratha cavalry, who tried to protect the retreating battalions. The light Southern men and horses scattered before the shock, pursued for miles by Bijai Singh and his cumbrous cavaliers. But these latter, when the enemy had fled, turned their speed-spent chargers to ride back to camp, each side of the valley being by that time lined by the imperialists. The foot were in squares, with field-pieces between; the Rāthors rode down a valley of death. The story went that four thousand saddles were emptied in the ride. Unfatigued and intact, the infantry of the New Model now became assailants in their turn. The battalions, deploying, advanced in line, supported by their field-pieces, and gradually rolled up the motley array of the Rājputs; by 3 p.m. all attempt at opposition had ceased. The whole camp, with munitions of war and vast plunder, rewarded the victors; the conflict of modern warfare with mediæval was decided in favour of science. The hollow-square formation introduced by the Savoyard may have been due

to his own initiative or to recollections of the ancient tactics of the Romans ; it was now established in Indian fighting, and proved as much of a success against the bold Rājput cavaliers as it was hereafter to become on the more famous field of Mont St. Jean.

The echo of this blow resounded far and wide. 'Timur Shah heard it in the Khaibar, and held back his Barbarian hordes, longing for the loot of India. It reached the Nana at Poona, causing him to redouble his intrigues against his distant but dangerous competitor. Still more did it stimulate the rivalry of Holkar, the immediate neighbour of Sindhiā, who resolved to raise a force on the same lines as that which had won such victories for Sindhiā. Meanwhile General de Boigne, though much prostrated by months of labour and anxiety in an extreme climate, saw no prospect of repose. Tāragarh, indeed, gave little further trouble, having capitulated in November, after the failure of Bijai Singh to relieve it ; but the General marched at once on the enemy's capitals. Jodhpur, Jaipur, and Udaipur all made their submission before the end of the year. To make more effectual the punishment of Jaipur—which had shown signs of meditating a fresh outbreak—the General imposed upon the Raja a fine of seventy lakhs of rupees, in addition to heavy arrears of tribute due to the Imperial exchequer, and marched upon Jaipur to enforce his demand. Partab Singh—the chief in question—saw the uselessness of resistance, after one more lesson, and so, consenting to the terms imposed, appointed a meeting in his capital for the ratification of the agreement. Those who have seen that splendid city may imagine the scene ; the unclouded "cold weather" morning with cool breeze and brilliant sun ; the wide street lined with orderly spectators ; the Maharaja issuing from his lofty palace-gateway, mounted on a richly-caparisoned elephant and followed by a *cortège* of mailed horsemen and many-coloured courtiers ; on the other side, the war-worn

General, surrounded by his officers, and escorted by his bodyguard, or *Khās Risāla*. He was welcomed with every mark of respect ; the Maharaja took him into his howdah with a public embrace, and they entered the palace together and proceeded to the Durbar hall.

The negotiations being duly ratified, on a basis already settled, the General returned to his camp, and in due time departed on his return to the Duāb. But a strange moment awaited him on the way. As he passed through the small Rājput principality of Macheri—now known as Alwar—he was invited to visit the Rana at his newly-acquired capital, whose name has since been given to the whole State. Here he was received with much ceremony by the Prince, whose friendly sentiments, however, appear to have been by no means universal. As the General was sitting in full Durbar, on the right hand of the Rana, he saw that a follower of the latter was leaning over the back of the chief's chair engaged in earnest conversation with his master in an unknown tongue. The Rana made a gesture of disapprobation, while the *vakil*—or secretary—of the General turned as pale as his native complexion would allow ; the conversation was, however, resumed until the distribution of *pān* and *attar* gave hint that the interview was ended. The Durbar broke up, and as the General rode back to his tent, attended by the *vakil*, he received from the latter a startling explanation, namely, that the Rana had been considering a proposal for his—the General's—assassination. Boigne was too wise a man to complain, and departed in amity from the Rana's territory, taking his headquarters to Aligurh, the centre of the districts assigned for the pay of his legion. In 1792 the General conducted a brief, but fierce, campaign against Holkar, to be described hereafter, overthrowing his new levies and driving him into Southern Malwa.

This was the termination of the short, but arduous, military labours of the able Savoyard, who was now to be occupied, for the remainder of his stay in India, by the

duties of civil administration. During the past two years he had done thoroughly all that had been required of him in the field, having taken two strong fortresses, won several pitched battles, and made his master the lord paramount of a region as wide as France and Germany together. And this he had done, with men hardly equal in native valour to his opponents and very inferior in number, by the force of his own character and the skill of his European subordinates. Of some of these a detailed notice will be taken further on ; here we need only remark that they must have been well chosen and well trained. We will now follow him into civil life, where we shall observe an equal degree of faithful ability.

Indian administration has now become an almost mechanical system, applied with fixed rules, conducted on quasi-scientific principles, and rewarded by considerable success. Peace and order are maintained ; pestilence and famine are combated, and the sufferers relieved ; justice is attended to, and revenue collected by legal methods. In the time of war and anarchy with which we have been concerned, none of these arrangements were attempted ; and now that peace was being restored, all that the best-intentioned men could contemplate was a rough recovery of order in the desolated land.

Aligurh—now the designation of a British District—was a name then used exclusively for a fort hard by the town of Koil, half-way between Agra and Dehli, which had belonged to the late Afrasyāb Khan. Here the General established his headquarters, having his private residence in a house and grounds still known as Sahib-Bagh, on the road between the city and the fort. By virtue of his tenure he was to manage all the estates within the limits of his charge, collecting the revenues, and appropriating to himself any balance which might remain after paying the officers and men of his force, now consisting of 30,000 of all arms, divided into three

brigades. In theory the General's salary was Rs. 12,000 a month, with 2 per cent. on the collections. In practice he was Commander-in-Chief of the Imperial army and supreme ruler in all Northern India. For the purposes of this great duty he had a number of European subordinates; brigadiers, and other officers; his old friend, Sangster, being in charge of the gun foundry. In the civil administration there were two departments—the Persian office, where the detailed business was transacted, and the French office, presided over by the General in person; monthly statements were submitted to Sindhia's Council at Dehli.

The manner in which the General carried on these various duties has been set forth by an eye-witness:— “I have seen him daily and monthly rising with the sun, to survey his factories, review his troops, enlist recruits, direct the vast movements of three brigades (providing for their equipment and supplies), harangue in Durbar, give audience to envoys, administer justice, regulate the civil and revenue affairs, hear letters from different parts, and dictate replies, carry on an intricate diplomatic system, superintend his private trade, examine accounts, direct and move forward a most complex machine” (letter of “Longinus” in the *Calcutta Telegraph*). The same writer adds that the General employed no European to aid him in civil business.

Those who know what it is to work in the trying climate of India can imagine that the combination of so much public and private business in such conditions would tell upon the health of a European now approaching the later period of life. Boigne was now turned of forty years, more than half of which had been passed in toil, danger, and anxiety; he was very rich, as riches were then considered, and his thoughts, no doubt, often turned to home and rest. On February 12, 1794, he lost his generous

master, Mahadaji Sindhia, who died suddenly while on a visit to Poona. The estates and offices of the deceased devolved on his grandnephew, Daulat Rao, a young man of very inferior character and capacity, who remained in the Deccan, leaving the affairs of Hindustan to be managed by the General. That officer accordingly soon became the centre of intrigue. Offers on behalf of the blind old Emperor, and contrary offers from the new Shah of Cabul, failed to move him. For he declared that it was not for him to pronounce upon the destinies of the Dehli throne ; he was in the service of the house of Sindhia ; if he ceased to serve that house he would cease to serve at all. The young Vicegerent was unwilling to part with so faithful and valued a subordinate, but the General became more and more bent on leaving India, till towards the end of 1795 it appeared that, unless he did so at once, his life would not be prolonged. Thus he at length obtained indefinite leave of absence and left Aligurh for ever.

In February, 1796, he marched out at the head of his bodyguard, and, after some months of vain struggle for recovery at Lucknow, finally reached Calcutta. During the General's stay at Lucknow¹ the Nawab made an unavailing attempt to obtain possession of the splendid corps which accompanied the invalid—a body of six hundred Persian troopers, superbly armed, mounted, and equipped, with a hundred camel-men on high-bred animals, and a small battery of light guns, the whole of the property being owned by himself. It was eventually acquired for the East India Company by the then Governor-General, who paid a handsome sum to Boigne and gave liberal terms of engagement to the men. In January, 1797, the General, having wound up all his Indian affairs, finally left the port of Calcutta on board the Danish vessel *Cronberg*, com-

¹ For some account of the General's health and of his uncertainty while at Lucknow, *v. Appendix.*

manded by Captain Tennant. A Calcutta journalist bore the following testimony to his character : " In his military capacity he softened, by means of an admirable perseverance, the ferocious nature of the Marathas. He submitted to the discipline and civilisation of Europe soldiers who till then had been regarded as barbarians."

He was not only the greatest soldier of his class, but by far the most distinguished by benevolence and general ability.

CHAPTER VI

General de Boigne in retirement—His good deeds and recognition by his King and country—Death and burial.

WHEN General de Boigne quitted the shores of India he may well have looked upon himself as one of whom it might be said, "His warfare is accomplished." Although his actual service in the field had lasted only between five and six years, he had assuredly done a great work. In the civil department in which he had been exclusively engaged since he brought back his victorious brigades from Rajputāna, he had laboured for an even shorter period; yet it is the recorded opinion of a distinguished historian that he "made it possible for Sindhia to rule in Hindustān, at the same time that he controlled the councils of Poona . . . It was Boigne who introduced into the North-West Provinces the germs of that civil administration which the English have since successfully developed." ¹ A very remarkable record for any man to show, even if that man had been habituated and practised in either military or civil action, still more when he was a foreigner and little more than an amateur in both. He might well solace the tardy hours of a voyage round the Cape by anticipations of repose in a brief obscurity; as a matter of fact, a future of over thirty years was still before him, filled with honourable and useful occupation.

The passage was not, however, a long one, as things

¹ Malleson, *Final French Struggles*.

then went ; the *Cronberg* arrived in the Thames before the end of 1797, which had been a year of some excitement in London. The news had just arrived of the death of his old mistress, the Czarina Catherine—full to the last of those designs against Persia and India in which he had once been almost led to aid her efforts. The Spanish Government had declared war against the British, and the men of the Royal Navy were choosing that moment to break into open mutiny, blockading the mouth of the river and actually detaining merchant ships. The General, however, found order restored and navigation set free. He was so welcomed in London that he made that foggy capital his social centre for some years. By and by, as things settled down in France, he transferred his headquarters to Paris, where he married the daughter of a returned *émigré*, the Marquis d'Osmond ; but the marriage was not a success, and the General went on to his native land, where the King made him a Count and where he settled with his son. Whatever may have been his disillusions, it does not appear that they ever induced him to regret India, or to show the very least inclination to return to the land of his glory. In 1799 Sindhia wrote him a letter in which he courteously replied to one in which the General had sought the aid of his former master in some matters of private business : “Since it has pleased God,” wrote the chief, “since it has pleased the Universal Physician to restore to you the blessing of health, and having regard to our jealous impatience to see you again, it is your bounden duty no more to prolong your stay in Europe, but to appear before the Présence with all possible despatch . . . without your wisdom the execution of the greatest projects is entirely suspended.” Come out, in fact, at once, and by Bombay !

So wrote Sindhia, with much more to the same effect, but the bird was flown, and too wise to be caught by any chaff that could be thrown out from the Poona Chancery

where, indeed, matters were ripening in which our wary adventurer would not have engaged with a light heart. Of these we shall get a glimpse in a later chapter.

Meanwhile we notice the General, not yet separated from his wife, frequenting society at Paris and rumoured—so Wellesley wrote—as much consulted by a still abler adventurer than himself, the General Bonaparte. After that great soldier had become Emperor of the French, and scourge of Europe, General de Boigne characterised his system of politics as “an usurpation abounding in iniquities”; nevertheless he may possibly have been asked for information about India at an earlier period and have given it, as the lawyers say, without prejudice.

In any case, he certainly left France for good, but as certainly approved of the Restoration, which relieved Savoy and other minor Powers of much unpleasant pressure. Louis XVIII. showed him attention, making him Maréchal du Camp in the French army, and giving him the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour.

He continued, however, to be a good citizen of the small provincial capital in which he had first seen the light. Thus, as late as 1822, he delivered an address to the Chambéry Municipal Council from which the following passages may be extracted to our advantage:—

“If Divine Providence has deigned to crown with success the military career that I had embraced and long followed, it has at the same time loaded me with the gifts of fortune beyond my feeble talents, my endeavours, I will even say, my desires. Inheriting nothing from my father, owing all to God, I see my duty of recognition in seeking to assuage the sufferings of humanity. . . . Accordingly I hesitate no longer to put in execution my long-studied project for the foundation of institutions for the relief of misery and for the benefit of my fellow-citizens.

“Trusting, gentlemen, to your public spirit, I flatter myself that we may succeed in bringing into this town

many beneficial changes whereby it may become more healthy, more agreeable to all, and at the same time more especially advantageous to those who, borne down by infirmities, too often perish for want of timely aid after enduring remediable trouble."

The Council promptly voted a suitable reply to this address, and gratefully accepted the truly liberal proposals of "General Count de Boigne." Nor was the national Government backward in acknowledgment ; by order of the King, the bust of the munificent "Nabab" was executed in marble for the public library, and he was made Lieutenant-General of the Kingdom and Grand Cross of the Order of SS. Maurice and Lazarus.¹

This was indeed a "Happy Warrior," who was not content with an unprecedented prosperity so long as he had not made his fellow-citizens partakers of it. Among his benefactions to his native place have been enumerated :—

Extension of the Hôtel-Dieu Hospital by additional wards for sick paupers ; an almshouse for forty aged persons of either sex ; an endowed mendicity dépôt for one hundred paupers, with an asylum for pauper lunatics ; a supplementary infirmary for those afflicted with infectious disorders, and another for travellers ; these first, for the helpless and ruined adult. But the young were also cared for : there was an endowment for placing in life deserving children of both sexes, and an exhibition in the Royal College. A new Capuchin Church was built ; the theatre was repaired at a cost of 60,000 francs ; a new street, with a colonnade, was opened through the whole breadth of the town ; two old streets were widened, and much-needed improvements were made to the public library and the Town Hall ; finally, annuities were founded for the Academic Society, the volunteer corps, and the fire brigade.

¹ For a notice of the General about this time see Tod's *Rajasthan*, i. 765 : Colonel Tod visited Chambéry in 1826, and saw him there.

Thus no class of society, no department of life, lacked the attention of the wise and benevolent veteran ; and Chambéry might have said of him : If you would seek his monument, look round. What she did say was much to the same effect ; the address of the municipality closed with these words :—

“ You have foreseen all sorrows, to provide for each a cure ; the unfortunate find in you support at every instant of their lives. Age reposes by the side of the tomb ; and youth gains new wings for its ardour, deriving from a strong, pious, and skilful education the conservative principles of human society ; while your example inspires the fire of the noblest enterprises.”

In the midst of these good works age stole slowly on the veteran. Colonel Tod, the historian of his old enemies in Rajputāna, visiting him in 1826, thought him still vigorous. But in the following years his strength began to fail, and at last yielded to one of those light touches to which an octogenarian must be always liable. On the 25th of June, 1830, the *Journal de Savoie* announced his death as having taken place four days before. For two days every shop and place of business in the city remained closed ; the bells tolled unceasingly from every steeple while the body lay in state in the Cathedral, watched by the “ Company of Noble Knights.” The funeral was followed by the royal household ; the town-guard ; the Academic Society ; the Chamber of Commerce ; the directors of the Hospitals ; the magistrates, aldermen, and notables of the city ; fifty of the General’s tenant farmers, and a crowd of workmen, together with columns of troops, their bands playing funeral marches ; closed by numbers of clergy and the poor.

A few days later, the Academy offered a prize for the best biography of the deceased, which was, in due course, awarded to his son, Count Charles de Boigne. At the same time the Town Council made two public fountains

in further commemoration, thus giving the dead benefactor a fresh means of that well-doing which had occupied his latest living thoughts.

Such was the retirement of this great Savoyard, at a time when his British contemporaries were spending their ill-gotten gains in idle ostentation and political corruption ; "raising," as has been said, "nothing but the price of fresh eggs and rotten boroughs."

In person General de Boigne was tall and handsome ; the portrait prefixed to the Memoir by his son shows a fine head and projecting brow. The eyes and nose also are strong and prominent ; the shaven lips are firm and not too thin ; the lower jaw and chin are boldly squared. Like his great co-eval and patron, Warren Hastings, he was of temperate and scholarly habits, and well-versed in Latin literature ; he wrote and read several modern languages with ease and correctness ; his conversation, according to contemporaneous witnesses, was witty and graceful. Colonel Francklin, an able British officer of those days, and at the time one of the most popular writers on Indian subjects, has recorded strong testimony in favour of his accomplishments.

It must be evident that, with the one exception of his not very successful matrimonial experiment, General de Boigne is a singular example of human possibility.

CHAPTER VII

Records of the New Model—Chevalier du Drenec and the fight at the Pass of Lakhain—Charge of Rāthors at Sanganir—Michel Raymond—The Battle of Kardla—The Nizam's regular troops disbanded by order of Mornington—The brothers Filose.

WE have seen, in observing the military career of General de Boigne, how the secular contest between cavalry and infantry developed in India, where the mediæval ideas of warfare lingered after they had been dispelled in more progressive regions. The tactics which had been originated in Europe by Edward III. proceeded on the experience which showed that a man is a better fighter than a horse. If a line of spikes holds firm, and is supported by a continuous discharge of missiles, the horse will not charge home, let the courage of the rider be ever so high. But, to produce these conditions in the infantry, the foot soldiers must be self-respecting men, thoroughly well-disciplined and commanded. We have seen what, in the opinion of contemporaneous journalists, had been the moral evolution of the Indian soldier in the New Model ; it is therefore proper that we should now endeavour to learn something of the subordinate officers by whose help that result had been obtained. In this attempt we can fortunately command the aid of a competent writer who was himself a member of the force. In treating of General de Boigne, the testimony of a newspaper correspondent who used the signature of "Longinus" was cited above ; the true designation of whom was Louis Ferdinand Smith, Major in the army of Sindhiā.

The account of some of the more remarkable of these officers of fortune published by Major Smith was brought out by subscription in Calcutta, without any date upon the title-page, but apparently about the year 1804, and subsequently reprinted in London. Many of the names on the subscription list are those of men who afterwards found honourable mention in Anglo-Indian history, among them being those of Sir John Anstruther, the then Chief Justice ; of Sir George Barlow, afterwards Governor of Madras ; of Becher, Boileau, Colvin, familiar as founders of well-known Indian clans ; of others of like type : of General Ochterlony ; and of the Marquess Wellesley, who at that time ruled the Indian Empire as then constituted. The little work has only some ninety pages, but it is a workmanlike piece, illustrated with well-drawn plans of battles, and it bears the title, *A Sketch of the Rise, Progress, and Termination of the Regular Corps formed and commanded by Europeans in the Service of the Native Princes of India*. It is to the information which it gives that we shall be indebted for almost all that we can learn upon the subject in the way of biographic fact in this chapter. —

Most of the officers referred to were Frenchmen who had originally come out to Pondichéri with Lally and been left to seek their fortune after the collapse of the French enterprise in 1760. Of such were Médoc (of whom some account has been given already), as also Martin, Sombre, St. Frais ; probably Du Drenec and Perron ; certainly Law.¹ What was to be said of these also has been said, excepting Perron and Du Drenec. At a later date appeared the Hessings—Hollanders ; the Filoses—Neapolitans ; and, of Britons and Anglo-Indians, the Skinners, Gardner, Shepherd, Sutherland, Davies, Dodd, Vickers, Bellasis, and the brothers Smith. Most of these were, sooner or later, in Sindhia's service ; but the

¹ For a further notice of these men about 1764, see Broome's *Bengal Army*, p. 419.

greatest of all, George Thomas, fought for his own hand, like Hal of the Wynd, and his exploits are accordingly recorded separately here.

Of the Chevalier du Drene~~C~~ there is not very much to note. His very name is uncertain, one calling him Dudernek, another Dodernaigue, according to phonetic interpretation of native usage. He seems to have belonged to an ancient Breton family—now extinct—known in provincial history as “Du Drenek-Keroulas”; he did not enter life in the army, but came to India as *enseigne-de-vaisseau* (midshipman) about 1773. French power and influence in the Indian seas were at the lowest at that moment, when the Treaty of Paris (1763) had indeed “restored Pondichéri to France, but it was a Pondichéri dismantled, beggared, bereft of all her influence. During the fifteen years which followed . . . Pondichéri had been forced to remain a powerless spectator of her rival on Indian soil.”⁴ Not finding encouragement in so depressed a service, the young sailor quitted his ship and made his way up the country, where he joined his countryman, Médoc, and they both engaged in the Imperial service under Mirza ~~Najaf~~. On the departure of Médoc, the Chevalier also vanished from the scene in Hindustan; whether in a return to Europe or in wanderings about India, we have no information. At length, in 1791, we hear of him as retained to raise a body of foot by Tukaji Holkar, then engaged in an attempt to emulate the success of Madahaji Sindhia. The force of Du Drene~~C~~ consisted of four battalions; but before it had been completely trained, it was unfortunate enough to encounter a strong detachment under General de Boigne in person. Almost everything was against the young legion: the fame and prestige of the enemy's leader, their own inexperience, and the smallness of their numbers. But Holkar had political reasons for desiring to invade the territories of his rival. In June, 1792,

⁴ Malleson's *Final French Struggles*, pp. 3, 4.

Sindhia had set out on his last journey to Poona, where he became engaged in a struggle for favour with the astute Brahman, Nana Farnavis ; and he had sent for a strong bodyguard of regulars, weakening his local army by 10,000 of his best men. The moment seemed to Holkār full of promise. Summoning Ismail Beg from his temporary retirement, he hurled his cavalry on northern Malwa, the new legion, with a strong artillery, acting as the nucleus of the force.

The first counter-stroke was delivered at a strong place called Kanaund, in the northern part of the arid tract that lies between the capital and the borders of Haryana. Here the client of Mirza Najaf, who has been already mentioned as a converted Hindu called Najaf Kuli Khan, had just died in a stronghold of earth faced with stone, among sand-hills and low growths of tamarisks, where his widow—a sister of the late Ghulām Kādar—continued to reside. Ismaïl Beg—who was an old ally of the family—flew to the aid of his deceased friend's sister ; and a column under Colonel Perron marched to besiege the place. Some account of the siege will be found in the story of Perron later on ; at present we have only to notice that Holkār's army advanced at its best pace in the hope of relieving Kanaund and raising the siege. Boigne, bent on frustrating this design, came against them ; and the two forces met in September, 1792, at Lakhairi, on the road leading from Ajmir. The Marathas were posted on ground well chosen, the guns and infantry being on the crest of a pass ; a marsh covered the front, the sides being flanked by deep jungle and trees, and protected by no less than 30,000 Maratha horsemen. The action that ensued was considered by Boigne the severest in which he was ever engaged. As he led up his battalions he was exposed to a terrific fire from Holkār's batteries, and his own guns, on the support of which he had relied, met with unexpected misfortune. The marsh impeded their progress,

and, as they advanced slowly under the enemy's fire, they became rapidly disabled. First, a tumbril was hit by a hostile ball and exploded ; this explosion communicated itself to the next carriage.* In a short time a dozen ammunition-wagons were on fire, scattering around the whole of their contents. With rapid instinct Holkar caught the flying instant, and sought to charge the guns by extricating his squadrons from the protection of the jungle. But even in that terrible crisis the influence of discipline prevailed ; the seasoned battalions of the enemy breasted the hill in face of all obstacles, firing from flank and rear at the encumbered cavalry. Maratha horsemen were always better at scouting than in a pitched battle. Ismail, with his men-at-arms, might have led an effectual charge, but Ismail was engaged elsewhere. As Holkar and his light horse withered under the fire of Boigne's musketeers, they were charged by the Moghal cavalry, few in number, but superior in equipment and weight. The whole force was quickly dispersed. Delivered from these dangers, the column resumed its advance up the pass, held tenaciously by the batteries and battalions of Du Drenec. Raw levies as they were, they did credit to their leader. The European officers fell at their posts —with the exception of their leader ; the men were shot or bayoneted where they stood ; thirty-eight guns were lost. It was the first encounter between two bodies imbued with the same discipline ; the scale had been turned by the inefficiency of Holkar's horsemen ; but Du Drenec had covered himself with whatever glory was obtainable in such fields.

Escaping from this slaughter, which ceased on the cessation of resistance, our adventurer did nothing more for some time, beyond taking part in the campaign in the Deccan which ended with the battle of Kardha (1755). As we have no particulars of his conduct on that occasion, the description may be postponed till we come to notice the career of Raymond, who commanded on

the side of the Nizam. The next time of meeting the Chevalier is in 1799, when he was on the winning side at the battle of Sanganir, though temporarily involved in a catastrophe that—as at Lakhairi—left him almost sole survivor of his force. This was the last (or almost the last) of the fights* between the Princes of Rajputāna and the head of the house of Sindhia—once quieted by Boigne, as we have seen. That able officer was now in retirement—we have noted the new Sindhia's letter vainly attempting his recall. The chief command in Hindustan had devolved on a native General called Lakwa Bada, the chief being away at Poona, and Jaipur joined to Jodhpur in a renewed rebellion. So formidable appeared this outbreak that Ambaji Ainglia was deputed to the Dada's aid, taking with him a strong brigade of disciplined foot commanded by Du Drenec. The whole force consisted of six brigades of infantry with the due artillery, 20,000 Maratha horsemen, and a motley contingent of irregular spearmen on foot. On the Rājput side was an infantry far inferior; but there was also a noble force of 50,000 heavy cavalry, the fighting Rāthors of Marwar (Jodhpur), of whom we have already heard. Sanganir, where the encounter took place, is the name of a small village situated on the sandy plain west of Jaipur city; and here the troops of Sindhia attacked the Rājputs one March morning in 1799. But the Rāthor horsemen were on the alert; and, under command of Siwai Singh—a henchman of the Jodhpur Raja—charged furiously down on the intruders, the brigade of Du Drenec, who had endeavoured to surprise their morning slumbers. The scene of Mairta was now reproduced, with very important variations. More than 10,000 in number, the Rāthor cavaliers trotted their horses out of the lines, while the battle began to rage in other quarters. Du Drenec prepared to receive the charges with squares formed and field-pieces belching grape from the intervals. But the Rāthors would take no

denial, the trot became a gallop as they drew near, and the noise of their onward rush was heard—says an eye-witness—above all the roar of the battle. Regardless of the grape-shot, riding over fifteen hundred of their own front ranks laid low by the fire of Du Drenec's infantry and field-pieces, they pressed on with increased momentum. Neither the fire of the grape-loaded cannon nor the glitter of the bristling bayonets availed to check the charge. Like a storm-wave it passed over the brigade, leaving scarcely a vestige of life in its track. Du Drenec was flung under a gun-carriage; almost all his Europeans lost their lives on the spot. Nevertheless the day of heavy cavalry had departed; science and discipline asserted themselves in spite of headlong valour; the Rājputs were finally put to flight with almost incredible carnage; that single action decided the campaign.¹

Du Drenec—perhaps in consequence of these defeats—left the service of Holkar and joined Perron at Aligurh, where his house is still in existence and serves as the Court House of the District Judge. In September, 1803 (when Lake advanced from Cawnpore), Du Drenec was absent, having been posted at Poona in command of 5,000 men. Ordered to Hindustan, he started to obey; but by the time of his arrival at Mathra he heard of the fall of Aligurh and Dehli, and of the march on Agra, while he found his troops suspicious of their European officers. In these trying circumstances the Chevalier adopted the wisest course open to him, surrendering to Colonel Vandeleur, of the 8th Dragoons, in company with Major Smith—our author—and another white officer. The British authorities gladly permitted them to go into private life, with all that belonged to them. Du Drenec seems to have settled in the country, for Smith (in the book referred to) mentions him as having

¹ This account is condensed from that given by Colonel Skinner, C.B., who was present with Sindhia's army.

been thirty years in India and being still there while he (Smith) was writing.

In the battle of Kardla—to be noted presently—where the power of the Deccan Moghals was temporarily broken by their Maratha neighbours—the victorious side, on which Du Brenece fought, was opposed by an equally brave and more distinguished French officer. Although the Nizam's Regulars were unable to achieve success, the fault was by no means theirs; and their commander was a meritorious man, said to be still commemorated by the natives of those regions.

In what line of life Michel Raymond was bred is not recorded, but he was a native of France and came out to Pondichéry in a mercantile firm. In 1778 Great Britain declared war with the French Government, who were openly abetting the revolted Colonies in North America. On receipt of the news the authorities of Fort St. George sent a force to besiege Pondichéry, which capitulated after a respectable defence; and Raymond (with a nephew of Count Lally, and other adventurous men) repaired to Mysore, where he enrolled himself in the service of Haidar 'Ali, the usurper of that State, and irreconcilable enemy of the British. In 1783 the famous Patissier, known in Indian history as "Marquis de Bussy-Castelnau," had returned, under orders from Louis XVI., to the country where he had won so much distinction twenty years before; and he was now, with shattered health and a mind enfeebled by years and slothful living, engaged in a hopeless contest with Sir Eyre Coote. Raymond's old employer, Haidar, having just died, the French adventurer was free to accept a post on Bussy's staff; and, on Bussy's death two years later, Raymond betook himself to the capital of the Nizam, where he obtained a high command. Up to this time Raymond had won no great distinction as a soldier; but he had temper, character, and talent, all of which had become known and raised him to a similar

position at Haidarabad to that which Boigne was soon to create for himself in the North. He gradually got together a respectable force of 15,000 regular infantry, with no less than 124 superior officers, all of European blood.

To mature this force was the work of seven or eight years, during which Raymond worked with very great success. At length, on the 10th of March, 1795, he marched from Bidar, with the army of the Nizam, mustering 70,000 irregular infantry, supported by 20,000 horsemen and a due proportion of artillery, under command of French officers. To meet this invasion the Peshwa had assembled a force estimated at 100,000 of all arms, including ten of Sindhia's trained battalions under Perron, four under Du Drenec, contributed by Holkar, with other similar contingents commanded, respectively, by Hessing, Filose, and Boyd, of all of whom we shall presently have a word or two to say. The armies were thus equally matched in all respects; nearly equal in numbers and organisation, each animated by the presence of good European officers. The encounter occurred at a place two marches to the southwest of Poona, which city would be at the mercy of the Moghals if they could prevail over the Maratha army. This latter was encamped on the slopes of the Purindha pass, the artillery being skilfully disposed on the heights above. The Moghals had the disadvantage of having to advance from lower ground, occupying as they did the plain between the pass and the village of Kardla; nevertheless there was sufficient ground for cavalry, by a bold use of which the Moghals drove back the Maratha right; Raymond's battalions, on the other side, advanced steadily under a heavy fire from Perron's guns, and the fight developed into a duel between the two Frenchmen, one endeavouring to storm the pass, the other determined to defend it. But the Moghul horse had fled in wild confusion under a tempest from the Maratha rocket-batteries; and the aged Nizam, who—

after the Asiatic manner—trusted only to his cavalry, insisted on retreat. Raymond's escort being essential to the safety of the Prince, he was obliged to retire, and the day was lost, although the retirement was effected in good order and there was no pursuit.

Raymond's next service was in suppressing the rebellion of the Nizam's heir-apparent, Mirza Ali Jah, who seized upon the fortifications of Bidar, and collected a following of disaffected chiefs and disbanded soldiers which Raymond easily dispersed in the month of June of the same year (1795). From that time he pursued his life of useful and faithful labour until his death, on the 25th of March, 1798, in time to be spared the pain of seeing the abolition of the trained force for which he had done so much. For the times were critical, and Lord Mornington, who had just assumed the office of Governor-General, which he was afterwards to render so illustrious under his later title of "Marquis Wellesley," had a grave combination to encounter. In the Punjab was an invading army of Afghans under Zaman Shah; in Mysore was the valiant Tippu, who had succeeded to the usurped power and to the anti-British policy of his father, Haidar. In Hindustan a French General has taken the place of the friendly Savoyard; in the Deccan an unscrupulous Maratha traitor held power at Poona and the Nizam was vacillating at Haidarabad. Tippu was in correspondence with Zaman Shah and harbouring French adventurers at Seringapatam. Perron had sent a mission to the young General Bonaparte, then on the eve of starting for Egypt. It was impossible that the British in India could render theirs the paramount power or could consolidate their Empire, so long as French officers were predominant in the chief native courts. It is an injustice to ascribe to Mornington—as is often done by injudicious admirers—a conscious plan of conquest. Judged by his own sayings and doings, his was a policy of peace and

order. He wrote of "our alacrity to resist aggression and to punish all the Principals and Accomplices of unjust attacks on a Government uniting moderation with energy and equally *determined to respect the just rights of other States.*" Nor was his conduct inconsistent: only that the presence and influence of French Republicans from Seringapatam to Dehli was felt to be totally incompatible with the expressed intentions.

The Nizam was the least formidable of all the country powers, and his regulars under Raymond had never given the British Government trouble, while their officers had for years lived side by side with ours in neighbourly comradeship. But there is no place for sentiment in such a policy as Mornington's. A few weeks after Raymond's death, his master was compelled to execute a treaty with the Company's Government including a clause for the disbanding of the force. As there was to be a "Haidarabad Contingent" under British command, this clause virtually implied nothing but the discharge of the French officers. The practical part of the affair was entrusted to Captain (afterwards Sir John) Malcolm, who displayed on that occasion much of the combined tact and firmness which afterwards—with some allowances for a too genial nature—made him the most famous of all the great soldier-diplomats of the Anglo-Indian service. The French officers were sent to Europe at the public cost.

So ended the work of Michel Raymond; but his memory remained. Colonel Malleson, who on the spot collected and digested almost all the facts, thus concludes his remarks: "No European of mark who preceded him, no European of mark who followed him in India, ever succeeded in gaining to such an extent the love, the esteem, the admiration of the natives. The grandsons of the men who loved him then revere him now. ^{the} hero of the grandfathers is the model warrior of the grandchildren. Round his tomb at the present day there flock still young men and maidens listening to the tales told by

wild dervishes of the great deeds and lofty aspirations of the paladin to whom their sires devoted their fortunes and their lives." ¹

The officers of Boigne's brigades, superior as they may have been in military experience, were in no case the equals of Raymond in ability or personal character ; and—with the single exception of the General himself—left no memory among the people. The character of the French officers also changed about the time of Boigne's retirement ; whether the vicissitudes of the Revolution had anything to do with the fact or whether it was due to the constantly increasing supply of British-born adventurers, it would be hopeless to inquire and impossible to determine.

We have, however, a curious testimony to the low esteem into which the French adventurers had fallen in papers found in Tippu's office at the taking of Seringapatam ; the character and conduct of the foreign officers of Sombre's brigade will be shown in the succeeding chapter. General de Boigne is only known to have employed two Italian officers ; and their record is far from exemplary. These were two Neapolitans, brothers named Filose, who were in command of fourteen battalions at Poona when the elder Sindhia died and remained there for some time afterward, as the bravos of local politics. Michele, the elder, was driven from the service for a treacherous outrage on the old Minister, Nana Farnavis, in 1797. His brigade was divided, one half being assigned to his brother Fidele, who (in spite of his name) entered into an intrigue with his employer's chief opponent in 1801. His treason being detected, he retired to Ujain, where he terminated an inglorious career by cutting his throat. Other unworthy successors of Law, Médoc, and Du ~~Dronec~~ will be noticed in the account of General Perron, the best of the new series.

¹ *Final French Struggles in India*, London, 1884. See also Grant Duff's *Mahrattas*, ii. 281.

CHAPTER VIII

Origins of George Thomas and the Begum Sombre—The Begum's marriage and consequent misfortunes—First attempts of Thomas as independent leader—Change in character of French adventurers—Ruined condition of Hindustan.

WE now come to a very different case : that of a man of humble origin indeed, but one who only needed conduct to enable him to fill a splendid place in the Anglo-Indian pantheon : the old saying of Juvenal illustrated—"Nullum numen abest si sit prudentia."

George Thomas was a native of Ireland though not, perhaps, of purely Hibernian origin, having been bred in Tipperary where a number of Cromwell's Ironsides had been settled in the seventeenth century. Coming to Madras as quartermaster of a man-of-war in the squadron of Sir Edward Hughes, he deserted in 1782, after the four inconclusive engagements fought in those waters between that Admiral and the Bailli de Suffren. After an obscure period of adventure among the Polgars of the Carnatic he appeared at Sardhana, where the relict of Sombre, known in Indian history as the "Begum Sombre," was holding the fief that had been allotted to that General for the maintenance of his legion in the Imperial service then administered by Sindha. That remarkable woman was destined to have a considerable influence on the career of Thomas, and no picture of the Anarchy that preceded the British occupation of Hindustan could have any pretence to completeness if it did not contain some notice of her singular fortunes.

Sombre, as we have seen, died at Agra in 1778 ; he was buried under a masonry canopy which is still to be seen in the Catholic cemetery there, his tomb bearing a Portuguese inscription. He left an insane wife and a son still in early childhood, and his fief was assumed, under an authoritative grant, by a favourite slave-girl whom he had purchased at Dehli ; she is believed to have been born at Kotana in the Meerut District, and to have been of Arab origin. Although usually regarded as Walter Reijnhardt's (Sombre's) relict, it is quite clear that she could not have been married with the rites of the Romish Church, seeing that he was a married man. Even if not yet a member of the Church, she was dealing with a man who was one.

The new Princess was—in any case—of Moslem birth but apparently found it convenient to conform to the creed of her protector, three years after whose death she was baptized along with her stepson (May 7, 1781). She then settled with her brigade at Sardhana, a village near Meerut ; and it was there that Thomas entered the service in which he soon attained great distinction. In the spring of the terrible year 1788—famous for the temporary triumph of Ismail Beg and Ghulām Kādar Khan, with the horrors which ensued—the Emperor Shah Alam undertook a futile expedition into the country between Dehli and Ajmir. Thomas accompanied in command of the Sardhana contingent and the Begum joined personally in the expedition. On the 5th of April the army halted to besiege Gokalgurh in what is now the District of Gurgaon. This was a strong place occupied by the converted Rājpūt, Najaf Kuli, already more than once mentioned ; and he had gone into rebellion against the decrepit Government, for which conduct it was desired to bring him to account. On the arrival of the Imperial forces the garrison made an immediate sortie, and the Moghals, taken by surprise, were thrown into great confusion. The assailants penetrated to the centre

of the camps, near where the Imperial standard had been erected in front of the tent in which the Emperor was reposing. With rapid resolution the Begum hastened up in her palanquin, attended by Thomas, with three battalions of infantry and a field-piece. Deploying, as best he might, and with his cannon manned by European gunners in the centre, the Irish seaman covered the Imperial abode and pelted the rebel horsemen with musketry and grape. Surprised in their turn by so unexpected a reception, the enemy wavered, hung back, and, when a body of Moghal cavalry had come to the spot, were finally repulsed. The Emperor's person was saved ; the defence so boldly begun turned into a rout ; the place was carried in the rush of the pursuit and the credit of the day was justly awarded to the valorous lady. In the Durbar that was held in the afternoon the Begum was publicly thanked by the Sovereign and honoured with the title of *Zeb-un-nissa* ("Glory of the Sex"), which she ever afterward continued to bear, along with that of "Joanna Nobilis," bestowed on her by the Church at her baptism.

At this time the Begum was still in the prime of life and, according to the description given at a later period by Thomas, was distinguished by a plump figure and fair complexion with large and lively eyes. Though of pure Muslim blood and always dressing in native costume, she had partially adopted European manners and sat at table unveiled. It was natural that a lady so rich and otherwise gifted should receive admiration from the soldiers-of-fortune by whom she was surrounded and perhaps be the object of selfish aspiration.

The brigade at this time consisted of five battalions, a regiment of Moghal horse, with forty pieces of artillery ; it contained three hundred Europeans, of whom the majority were gunners, and the officers not perhaps all of much higher social standing.

After the Emperor's return from his abortive campaign

—for the capture of Gokalgurh was the only success—he returned to Dehli and there underwent the terrible experiences of which mention has been already made. The Begum took her brigade to his help and once succeeded for a few weeks in delivering the poor old man from his tormentors. But when she had departed, Ghulām Kādar returned, accompanied by Ismail Beg and a force too strong to be successfully attacked ; and the Imperial tragedy went forward. For the next four years no Sardhana record is forthcoming ; but it is possible that Thomas was a candidate for the lady's favour though ousted by the superior attractions of a rival. In any case it is certain that in 1792 Thomas left the service and that the Begum, about that time, bestowed her hand on M. Levassoult, a French officer whom she had put at the head of the brigade. She was married by the rites of the Romish Church, unfortunately in a somewhat clandestine manner ; but the bridegroom was wise enough to provide two witnesses, countrymen and brother-officers, named Bernier and Saleur.

Thomas, meanwhile, had quitted the Sardhana service and betaken himself to Anupshahr, where he became the guest of the officers of a British Frontier Force which was maintained there under a treaty with the Nawab of Oudh, in whose territory it lay. The place is now a decayed town on the right bank of the Ganges, which eats it year by year ; but the numerous graves (from which all the memorial tombstones have long since disappeared) are a silent testimony of its former importance.

Settled here under the protection of Colonel Mac-Gowan, the British Brigadier, Thomas lived a pleasant life so long as his savings held out. Then, under the pressure of necessity, he was compelled to look about for means of livelihood. He accordingly took measures to acquaint the neighbouring nobility and gentry that he was prepared to execute orders for rapine and slaughter, and ere long obtained an engagement from a Maratha chief, one

Appa Khandi Rao, who had been in charge of the Gwalior District but whom Sindhia had lately for some reason or other seen fit to discharge. This chieftain was now preparing to take part in the game of grab that was already—had he known it—almost on the point of abolition ; and he engaged Thomas and his personal following, with orders to raise a small body of horse and one thousand foot, the reversion of certain lands—to be occupied hereafter—being assigned as a material guarantee for the equipment and pay of the little legion. The country thus bestowed was not only not transferable to the possession of the donee, it did not even belong to the donor. It belonged, in a strictly legal sense, to the sovereign—that is, to the Emperor at Dehli ; in another derivative, but equally lawful, way it belonged to the Alwar Raja, to whom it had been assigned by Imperial patent ; finally, it was actually in the possession of the Mewāti tribe. Of these last the memoir of Thomas only deigns to observe that “when a large force was sent against them, they usually took shelter in the mountains ; but when the force was inferior in numbers, by uniting they proved victorious.” By this unreasonable contumacy the Mewātis of these parts had incurred the displeasure of Appa Khandi who, conceiving himself entitled to their surplus produce, availed himself of the Irish sailor’s help to bring them to a better frame of mind. Agreeing to balance accounts every six months and furnished with two guns and a store of ammunition, George departed to kill the bear whose skin had thus been conferred upon him.

While Mr. Thomas (as his biographer is always careful to call him) was thus whiling away the shining hours, his former Princess was going through a stimulating experience.

Mention has been made of the rough and lawless character of too many of the late General Sombre’s officers ; the greater number of them, indeed, were most

illiterate ruffians who bitterly resented the airs and graces of their new master, by whose wish they were excluded from the dinner table of the Begum and generally kept at a distance. They affected also to be scandalised at what they, perhaps honestly, regarded as a mere intrigue *à la Catherine Deux*; and in all their discontents they were egged on by taunts and promises from a scheming rival. This was Aloysius Balthazar Reinhardt, son of the deceased General by the Muslim wife, whose crazy brain he would seem to have inherited. This youth had for the last few years been residing at Dehli, wearing native costume and bearing native titles, being known there as "Nawab Zafaryab Khan, Muzafar-ud-daulah." Prominent among the mutinous officers was a Walloon called Liégeois—whether it was a real name or not, some of his descendants continued to bear it down to recent times under the slightly altered form of "Lezwah." This man, in constant communication with young Reinhardt, worked upon the simple minds of the soldiery till almost all were ready for any act of insubordination.¹

The occasion was not to be long awaited. In 1794 Thomas had so far effected the conversion of the ill-advised Mewatis as to extort from them an agreement to pay one year's land-revenue, besides obtaining possession of Tijara and Jhajar, two of their chief places. He was making preparation to attack the neighbouring fort of Bahadurgurh when he was suddenly recalled by the news that Levassoult was moving in his rear with the troops of his old employer, the Lady of Sardhana. Unwilling to risk a present and certain defeat if, with his ill-trained and raw levies, he encountered a large and

¹ Such names as Liégeois, Bernier, &c., would be surely mangled by the natives, according to their custom. A comrade of one of the Lezwahs was known to the present writer as Epiphan Shistan; but on the rolls of the office in which he served was entered as "Shaitân Ferryfund." At an earlier date Ochterlony was known as "Loni Attar" (Butter-and-meal).

well-disciplined force, Thomas fell back upon Tijara, leaving Levassoult to get what he could out of the unfortunate Mewātis. In this place—Tijara—Thomas remained unmolested until summoned to the relief of his master, Appa Khandi Rao, who was in durance, in his camp, by reason of a mutiny. Hurrying to the spot, the faithful mercenary availed himself of the cover of a dark and rainy night to withdraw the Rao from a disagreeable and dangerous position, and Thomas escorted him to Kanaund, a strong place, already mentioned, of which we shall hear again later on.

For this piece of service the Rao showed a genuine, but not perhaps very expensive, form of gratitude, adopting Thomas as a son, and endowing him with valuable estates—belonging, doubtless, to other people but not the less generously offered. About the same time the agents of Sindhia at Dehli gave Thomas the first of several invitations to enter the Imperial service; invitations which the Irishman was always too independent to accept and of which the refusal ultimately caused his ruin.

Meanwhile Levassoult had made a direct attack upon Jhajjar, named above as the second of the towns held by Thomas in the Mewāti country; but, while the latter was doing his best to meet the storm, it was rolled back by a sudden outburst elsewhere. Liégeois had at length succeeded in seducing from their allegiance the troops left in cantonments at Sardhana; and now Levassoult had to hurry home to protect his wife, who was threatened with violence there. In May, 1795, Liégeois repaired to Dehli, and there placed before Aloysiis Reinhardt an agreement by which—with signs and crosses in lieu of signatures—his unlettered associates had bound themselves, in the name of the Holy Trinity, to do as Aloysiis might command. As soon as the Begum and her husband had wind of what was doing, they appealed to the British Governor-General for advice and assistance, and received

for answer permission to repair to Anupshahr, on the other side of the Duāb, and put themselves under the protection of Brigadier MacGowan.

In these anxieties the hot summer months passed, until the threatened couple had completed arrangements for escape from their perils. Having obtained the necessary authority from the Governor-General and from Sindhia, they departed from Sardhana in the dawn of an October morning, the Begum in her palanquin and Levassoult on horseback ; they also carried with them portable property and specie which conduced to the frustration of the whole plan. Scarcely had they advanced three miles upon the way to Meerut when they saw dust-clouds rising behind them and guessed that their flight had been discovered and that they were followed by pursuers eager for the spoil. They therefore parted, with an agreement that if either should be slain, the other would not survive. Levassoult led the way, urging the groaning bearers of the treasure-chests to hurry on ; but the pursuers came on fast ; the litter was arrested ; and the Begum, in sudden impulse, stabbed herself with a dagger. An attendant ran forward screaming and waving a bloodstained kerchief torn from the neck of her mistress, at sight of which Levassoult put a pistol to his head, drew the trigger, and fell lifeless from his saddle. The rebels turned back with the plunder, carrying the widowed Princess with them ; her stiletto had not touched a vital part, and she soon recovered : but it was to find herself the prisoner of her abandoned stepson. Aloysius assumed the command, plunging forthwith into the frantic debauchery in which he and his ruffianly companions found their ideal of bliss ; while the wounded Begum lay in the courtyard tied to a gun and only kept alive by the ministrations of a faithful Aya.

We have mentioned that a French officer named Saleur had been a friend of the deceased M. Levassoult

and a witness of the too private marriage. This man, who had held aloof from the proceedings of his fellows, now bethought him of the ill-used Irishman ; and, by a lucky chance, Thomas, in pursuit of his own plans, had moved his camp to no great distance. Saleur therefore sent him a report of what had happened, with a prayer for help. The gallant seaman, without a moment's delay, replied with a strong written remonstrance to his former comrades, pointing out that, if they persisted in their present conduct or presumed to injure the Begum, Sindhia would certainly disband the brigade and probably put them all to the sword. Swiftly following his message, he appeared at Sardhana, at the head of his *Khās Risāla*, or mounted bodyguard. The mutinous officers, ashamed of their late orgy and already weary of their new commander, alarmed by the reasonings of Thomas and swayed by a handsome douceur out of his generous munificence, returned to their allegiance. Aloysius was made prisoner and sent back to Dehli ; and the restored Begum—though she never repaid the £20,000 which Thomas had expended on her liberation—never again gave way to the temptations of Hymen. Saleur in future commanded the brigade.

This romantic history rests on the evidence of James Skinner—of whom more anon—and exhibits our Tipperary mariner in a most favourable light, showing how gallant he was, how prompt and prodigal of purse and person. Meanwhile, Appa Khandi Rao had become hostile, whether from native fickleness or prompted by jealous rivals of the foreign employé ; and the position of the latter might have become one of much anxiety had not his adoptive father suddenly lost his reason and committed suicide by drowning himself in the river Jumna.

Thomas at that moment was engaged in an expedition against the Sikhs, whom he ultimately drove beyond

that river ; and the power and property of the deceased Rao were, in his absence, assumed by the chief's nephew. It may be doubted how far the adoption of Thomas held good in Hindu law ; in any case, he was either unwilling or unable to assert his claims.

But he was now becoming a man of mark. The Sikhs—who at that time were no more than a predatory horde of badly-horsed marauders—had had what Thomas called “a sample of my method of fighting” ; and the Upper Duāb had been entirely delivered from their unwelcome presence. But he was now looking out for fresh employment, and accepted an engagement under Lakwa Dada, one of Sindhia's best Generals, to raise and train a considerable body of horse and foot in the frontier-district of Paniput, the scene of old campaigns. He got this second start in 1797, the beginning of a brief, but by no means inglorious, career.

It might, indeed, have ended in his entering the service of Sindhia permanently ; but, as we have seen already, Thomas was wanting in worldly wisdom ; and he preferred to run a solitary course, rather than plod on as a prosperous subordinate in a settled system.

Boigne might have conciliated the cometary man and brought him into a regular orbit ; but that wise commander was now gone, and the reins had fallen into the hands of a far less competent successor, a Frenchman of low birth and breeding whose proper name was Pierrre Cuiller, but who now assumed the style of “General Perron” ; to whom a separate chapter will be devoted presently.

In the meanwhile we shall be content to bear in mind what has been said of the changed character of the French adventurers after the fall of the Bourbon monarchy. Up to that time the greater number had been cadets of good families seeking fortune by the aid of their swords ; but now men of much humbler origin appeared in India, seeking a share of the good things

understood to be at the disposal of the brave and skilful. Perron, as will be more fully shown hereafter, was singularly unlike Thomas in some important respects, although in his first introduction nearly his parallel, having deserted from before the mast of a vessel in Suffren's squadron about the same time that Thomas left the adverse fleet of Admiral Hughes. But the times were such that the most commonplace plebeian had scope for the loftiest ambition in Indian fields ; and the dreams of Thomas were none the less likely to offend the views of Perron because of their romantic element. While Raymond was high in power at Haidarabad and Citizen Ripaud an ambassador between the Mauritius and Mysore, Perron may well have indulged in the framing of schemes in which he may have looked on the Irish seaman as a hostile element.

In the immediate present Thomas was giving but too much opening for criticism. When, in 1798, the Sikh danger had passed away, the Franco-Marathas at Dehli had no further use for him, and accordingly dispensed with his services. Consequently he and his followers had to adopt a predatory life on pain of starvation ; and it is to be feared that he was now little better than a dacoit defying the police. His admirers may regret to have to say so, but the truth is paramount.

The fact is that Upper India was at this pass that every man was a law to himself. The landlords robbed the tenants, and the soldiers robbed the landlords ; the only wonder is that there was anything left for any one. "It is a matter of fact," so an official record assures us, "that in those days the highways were unoccupied and travellers walked through byways. The facility of escape, the protection afforded by the heavy jungles, and the numerous forts that then studded the country, with the ready sale for plundered property, all combined to foster spoliation." If this was the state of

^x *Aligurh Statistics*, by Sherer and Hutchinson, Roorkee, 1856.

things at Aligurh, where Perron had his headquarters with all the best troops of the Government at his disposal, what must have been the condition of the tracts between Dehli and the desert, where Thomas was now operating ?

Returning to Jhajjar, the chivalrous buccaneer soon broke new ground by leading his men into the territory of the Jaipur State, which lay on the south of his present barren country. Sitting down before a small place not far from Kanaund, he demanded a ransom of one lakh, but accepted half of that sum on the fort capitulating under threat of assault. In the course of these transactions an unfortunate accident set fire to the town, and all was lost. After some further depredations in Jaipur lands, Thomas returned to his headquarters and began seriously to consider his future prospects.

It is probable that the district of Jhajjar had not at times in itself the means of subsistence for even such a small body of men as he now commanded, during the time that must elapse before new engagements could be obtained. Sindhia's French officers, too, were not masters to his mind. Northern Jaipur had been ravaged ; very possibly the forces of the State had taken possession of the wasted province ; what was to be done ?

The question was to be solved by the law of least resistance. On the southern side prudential considerations barred the way ; on the east the Dehli territory was under the direct sway of the French ; on the west lay the arid solitudes of Bikanir. But to the north was a tract of over three thousand square miles, known as Hariana ("Green-Land"), which was compact, capable, and without an owner. It contained many villages and small towns, with at least two more considerable places, both fortified ; an ancient canal passed through, and to the north-west ran the river Caggar, leaving a deposit of fertilising silt after each rainy season. But the soil was stiff, so as to depend upon irrigation for its fertility ;

and irrigation demanded constant labour, which had been rendered somewhat scarce by the ravages of a terrible famine that had depopulated the country in 1783-84.¹ Nevertheless the pasturage was generally good, the cattle were famous for strength and quality, the people were hardy, though somewhat lawless by reason of pastoral habits and long anarchy. In the midst of the district lay the two cities—Hánsi and Hisar—the latter being built on high ground and easily defensible. The failure of the water supply had acted disastrously on these places ; the fort of each was in ruins, and the streets were filled with squalid houses and clay huts.

¹ Some details of this visitation have been recorded by the present writer, in a former work (*Fall of the Môghal Empire*, 3rd ed., pp. 146, 147.) It was known, then and long after, as the *Chalisa Kant*,

CHAPTER IX

Thomas as the Raja of Hariana—His campaign in the Jaipur country—Dictator in Cis-Sutlej—Loyalty to British Crown—Perron's hostility, negotiations, and attack—Fall, captivity, and death of George Thomas.

THOMAS now underwent a wholesome change of view and conduct. About 1797 he had established himself at Hânsi. Here, as he told Colonel Francklin, his biographer, was his capital, where he rebuilt the decayed city walls and strengthened the defences of the fort. "As it (the town) had been long deserted, at first I found difficulty in providing inhabitants; but by degrees I selected between five and six thousand persons to whom I allowed every lawful indulgence. I established a mint and coined my own rupees, which I made current in my army and country,¹ as from the commencement of my career at Jhajjar I had resolved to establish an independence. I employed workmen and artificers of all kinds, . . . cast my own artillery, commenced making muskets, matchlocks, and powder; and, in short, made the best preparations for carrying on a defensive and offensive war."

This lucid explanation is enough to show that the Irish tar's occasional deviations into a predatory life

¹ The present writer has met with one of these rupees. It is a small, thick coin, bearing the title of the Emperor Shah Alam in Persian, with a capital 'T' in English character. He also conversed with one of Thomas's native officers at Hânsi in 1853, who spoke of the drinking-bouts of his old commander, but otherwise with admiration. Thomas was familiarly called "Sahib Bahadur."



*From the Frontispiece of the *Life* by Franklin*

were no more than a small part of his permanent programme, and we must now consider the whilom free-lance in the position of an independent potentate. For a brief moment he had realised a mighty dream.

His prudence was not always active; but at this moment it was reconcilable with his ambition. The field in Hindustan being occupied by stronger powers, the Sailor-Raja naturally looked in the direction of the Punjab. "I wished," he said afterwards, "to put myself in a capacity of attempting the conquest of the Punjab, and aspired to the honour of planting the British standard on the banks of the Attock." This might have been done then, perhaps, had Thomas been left alone; but there was a young man growing up among the Sikhs whose efforts were to make the task another matter when it came to be done, half a century later.¹

Another mark of superior judgment which our adventurer showed at this period was his care for his men, whom he not only paid well, but encouraged by providing a pension-fund for the benefit of their families. Rs. 40,000 were to be set aside for this purpose yearly; and as long as his powers lasted the pensions were punctually paid. At the same time he strenuously bore down all opposition to his authority, which by the first month of 1799 had been firmly consolidated in the greater part of the province. He had, indeed, now a real and respectable power. Besides his older acquisitions to the southward—of which the revenues sufficed for the maintenance of his army and the connected arsenals, he derived from his new lands the net income of two hundred and fifty estates (formerly rated at about £170,000 sterling a year) which he hoped to raise to their old prosperity. His military force was not, at this time, very large; he had, however, three well-drilled

¹ This, of course, was Ranjit Singh, of the Shukarcharia clan, born at Gujranwala about 1780, and now chieftain by the recent death of his father (*v. Ranjit Singh*, by Sir Lepel Griffin, "Rulers of India," Oxford, 1894).

battalions under British or Indo-British commanders, with fourteen guns, and his *Khās Risāla* of Pathan cavalry. With this contingent he presently took the field in a new attack upon the Jaipur State, by the invitation of his old master's nephew—the Maratha Wital Rao—acting, however, not as a subordinate, but as an independent ally, and stipulating for compensation in specie. After some temporary successes the invaders learned that the Raja was marching against them in person, at the head of 40,000 Rājputs inured to battle. The Maratha pronounced for an immediate retreat, but Thomas persuaded him to remain ; and they took possession of the walled town of Fatehpur, on the north-west of the State, in the sandy neighbourhood of the great desert. No trees were to be seen save the thorny acacia known in those regions as *Babool*, but of this Thomas found enough, when cut down and shaped, to make an *abattis* in front of the town, by the wall of which his rear was sufficiently protected.

Hardly had he completed his works when the hostile columns began to appear. The adventurer was now in a grave position, confronted by an overwhelming force, supported by an ally of proved incompetence, and dependent for deliverance on his own skill and the courage of a comparatively small force of mercenaries. On the third day after their arrival the enemy made a formal commencement of the leaguer, on which Thomas resolved on an offensive defence, making a sortie against a body of 7,000 Rājputs who had advanced to cut off his water supply by seizing on the neighbouring wells. Taking two battalions and eight field-pieces, escorted by a few troopers, Thomas repulsed the Rājputs ; but next morning was set upon by the main body of their army. His Maratha allies proved useless ; but the result of his unaided efforts is a lesson to all good soldiers, not, indeed, to despise any enemy, but neither to despair because they are outnumbered.

The foe advanced in three divisions : one to threaten the camp, a second to occupy the town, the third to try conclusions with the followers of the audacious white man. This last force might well appear to menace destruction to the isolated invaders, being composed of no less than ten regular battalions, with the marksmen of the Raja's bodyguard, a quantity of cavalry, and twenty-two guns. The General-in-Chief led them on against Thomas and his two thousand, who took post on a sand-hill to await the attack while their comrades defended the town. In the end Thomas not only repulsed the attack, but was able to hasten to the aid of the garrison, while that small but well-commanded force, observing his approach, came out in rear of the enemy, who were thus placed between two fires. Thrown into confusion and having no good leaders, the vast multitude broke and scattered in flight. Some time was now lost in persuading the Maratha horse to take up the pursuit, and Thomas admits the loss of two twenty-four pounders which—according to his narrative—remained embedded in the sand. He adds that he lost 300 of his men and a European officer ; and he had ultimately to retire from the invaded territory along with his pusillanimous ally.

This strange account rests on the unsupported evidence of George Thomas ; but, seeing that his narrative is always confirmed by independent testimony in all cases where such is forthcoming, it may be received with some confidence here. Certain it is that he was not hindered in retiring with the bulk of his force, and that neither then nor on any subsequent occasion did the Raja of Jaipur ever venture on attacking him ; while Thomas had sustained so little damage that, before the summer was over, he had made another raid into the western sands, and harried the possessions of the Raja of Bikanir, who had co-operated with his brother of Jaipur during the late campaign. From him Thomas extorted a handsome

indemnity, and next turned his attention to his former enemies, the Cis-Sutlej Sikhs.

While thus employed he received an invitation from Ambaji, one of Sindhia's generals, to join in an expedition against Udaipur. His share in this brief campaign was probably of little importance; but the period is so far noticeable that it showed the beginnings of unruliness among the troops, and of hostility on the part of General Perron. Against his own men Thomas displayed a resolute firmness; and, when ordered, in the name of Sindhia, to separate from Ambaji, he replied that he was acting under that General and could take orders from no one else.

At the end of 1799 Thomas was once more back at Hânsi; but before the end of the cold weather set off to renew his campaign against the Sikhs of Jhind and Patiala. In this, as he reports, "I had been more successful than I could possibly expect when I took the field with a force of 5,000 men and thirty-six pieces of cannon. I lost, in killed, wounded, and disabled, nearly one-third of my men, but the enemy lost 5,000. I realised nearly two lakhs (say £20,000), and was to receive an additional lakh for the hostages."

Thomas was now at his zenith, "Dictator," as he said, "in all the countries south of the Sutlej." Had his prudence and his diplomatic ability equalled his other gifts, he might have altered the history of Hindustan. As often happens, he was his own worst enemy, offending his neighbours by recklessness, raiding, utterly defying authority, when exercised by a Frenchman, and (occasionally at least) immoderate in the use of intoxicating liquor. That he, about this time, threw away good cards is very plain. At the beginning of the year 1800, the last French danger to the British Government on the southern side of India had been removed by the fall of "Citizen Tippu"; while in Hindustan Daulat Rao Sindhia was looking askance at General Perron, and

divided between hatred of the English and fear of Jaswant Rao Holkar, who was adopting a very threatening attitude. In this conjuncture Thomas opened negotiations with Holkar and, with Begum Sombre, at the same time employing the friendly intervention of Captain E. V. White, with a view to obtain the support of Lord Wellesley in Calcutta.

George, who had left Ireland many years before 1798, was always a loyal British subject. He now proposed to occupy the Punjab and place his conquests at the disposal of the Government. "I have nothing in view," he said, "but the welfare of my country and King. I shall be sorry to see my conquests fall to the Marathas; I wish to give them to my King." Certain necessary conditions being assumed, there was nothing unreasonable in the aspiration. The Sikhs, as has been shown, were not then the formidable opponents they were to become under Ranjit Singh, with a new generation of foreign officers, and Thomas easily beat them whenever he wished. In the opinion of Major L. F. Smith (a writer to whom we are constantly driven in studying the time) the substitution of Thomas for Perron at the head of Sindhiā's Regulars needed little more than a word from Wellesley; and Smith further assures us that the officers of British birth, of whom he was one, would have rallied round Thomas whatever the French might do. But it would seem that the importance of all this was not known to the Calcutta authorities; or, perhaps, the Peace of Amiens was already dawning on the vision of far-seeing statesmen. Wellesley was in somewhat intimate correspondence with the Prime Minister, and knew that First Consul Bonaparte had reasons for desiring to be on good terms with our nation. About this time the Consul wrote, with this design, his famous letter to George III.; and, though duly snubbed by the Cabinet of St. James's, he was only waiting for events which ere long opened the way to a treaty. In these circumstances the

Governor-General may well have refrained from interference with French influence in Upper India. The abstinence proved a mistake ; British interference, postponed for a couple of years, found the Marathas in greater strength and union, the friendly Sailor-Raja of Haryana being no longer there to help.

These matters will be dealt with more appropriately in the account of General Perron. Here we have only to notice their effect on the waning strength of George Thomas. Early in 1801 he nerved himself for a final effort, augmenting his little army and leading the best and largest portion to a fresh foray against the Sikhs, in the course of which he got within four marches of Lahore. Here he received intelligence that Perron had conducted a raid into Haryana—instigated, it is thought, by an appeal for aid from the Punjab. With habitual decision Thomas at once set his face homewards : beating off the Sikh horse who tried to harass his retreat, and rushing his men along at the rate of from thirty to forty miles a day, he reached Hânsi, only to find the birds of prey flown. Perron, discovering that he had made a mistake in attacking Thomas with so small a force, retired rapidly to Dehli ; but he presently returned with reinforcements. In August, 1801, the two armies drew near to each other at Bahadurgurh, about fifteen miles west of Dehli.

Perron, with or without an honest desire for peace, invited negotiation, and Major L. F. Smith was sent to the Hânsi camp to invite George to discuss preliminaries in a personal interview with the French Général. With our knowledge of the warlike patriotism of the one, and the almost certain ambition of the other, we are prepared for a failure. "Mr. Perron and himself," Thomas afterwards said, "being subjects of two nations then in a state of hostility, it was impossible that they should act in concert ; . . . he was moreover convinced that, as a Frenchman, Mr. Perron would

always be prepared to misrepresent his actions." He was willing, he added, to take part in the conduct of operations anywhere; but he informed Sindhia that he could act only under an Asiatic General. When at length persuaded to go to Perron's camp, he took an escort of his best men, and went, as he said, "prepared to observe the greatest circumspection in the interview."

A discussion conducted in this spirit was not likely to end well. "Perron stated his ultimatum with due plain-speaking. Thomas was required to surrender the lands of Jhajjar, to enter the service on a fixed monthly salary, and to detach immediately four battalions to assist Sindhia against Holkar, who had just driven the army of Sindhia before him and taken his city of Ujain. The spirit of Thomas would not brook these terms, specious as they appeared; he was in friendly communication with Holkar; he suspected Sindhia of treachery; he was determined not to serve under Perron. He accordingly, to use his own language, "without further discussion, abruptly broke up the conference and marched away in disgust." He retired to Hânsi, while Perron went back to his own headquarters at Aligurh, leaving the campaign to be conducted by an officer of his own nation, Major Louis Bernard Bourquin. Thomas had thrown a garrison into his fort of Georgegurh, commanded by a native officer named Shatab Khan; and Perron was able to put pressure on this person by reason of his being an Aligurh man, the members of whose family were at Perron's disposal. Another diplomatic move was made by inciting the Sikhs to invade the north of the district; Begum Sombre, too, was called upon for a contingent, which she sent; and reinforcements were ordered up from Agra. Surrounded by this ring of fire, our poor adventurer was brought to bay; he sent an earnest appeal to Holkar, and, without waiting for a reply, betook himself to the north, as if to en-

counter the Sikhs, but in reality hoping to draw off the attention of the invaders from Hânsi, where he had his stores and where his family were residing. In this move he was successful ; Smith's brother being left with a detachment to watch Georgegurh, the bulk of the army marched towards Jhind in pursuit of Thomas. That adventurer now doubled back unperceived by the enemy, reached Georgegurh by marching seventy miles in two days, and put Smith to flight with a loss of 700 men, besides arms, baggage, and ammunition. This was about the 26th of September ; next day Bourquin's cavalry reached Biri, a village near Georgegurh, and at once made a reconnaissance of Thomas's camp. They found it skilfully pitched, with a village on the left, the fort on the right, and the front defended by a line of sand heaps, probably artificial. The rear was also partly protected by another village.

On the afternoon of the 29th, Bourquin came up, and without affording the men time to rest, immediately ordered an attack, supported by the fire of thirty-five guns. But the shot fell into the sand ; the wearied infantry could do little ; twenty-five of Bourquin's tumbrils were exploded by shot from the enemy's batteries. Then two battalions sallied from the works under an officer named Hopkins, who "delivered a volley as if they had been at a review," and charged Bourquin's left with such vigour that it gave way in complete confusion. Night separated the combatants ; in the morning a truce was made, and it appeared that out of 8,000 men the assailants had lost one half in killed and wounded, amongst them being four European officers, one of whom was the younger Smith, who was shot dead. Thomas had lost only 700 men, but amongst them was Captain Hopkins, whose leg had been broken by a round shot during the last charge, and who died of his hurt a few days later. Hopkins was the son of a British officer

who had left him to make his way in the world, encumbered with the charge of an unmarried sister, and Thomas in this hour of his own distress found means to send Miss Hopkins Rs. 2,000 for her present necessities, with a promise of more should more be required.

But he was himself now almost at his last resources. Shatab Khan, the commandant of the fort, treacherously fired all the fodder; and Thomas, apparently losing his wonted energy, remained inactive for a month, hoping, perhaps, that help might come from Holkar.¹ Finally, finding himself deserted, with neither forage for the cattle nor food for the men, with treachery undermining his resources and his men deserting daily, Thomas conceived the enterprise of cutting his way through the investing enemies and throwing himself into Hânsi, there to make a final stand.

Accordingly, at nine o'clock on the evening of the 10th November, accompanied by his two remaining Christian officers, Hearsey and Birch, escorted by his bodyguard and mounted on a fine Persian horse, Thomas burst out, drove off a party of the enemy who tried to intercept him, and, making a considerable circuit, reached Hânsi next day. It is pleasant to know that the animal who carried his master a hundred and twenty miles in twenty-four hours was nobly provided for, and long survived in the stable of Sir. F. Hamilton, Bart., the British resident at Benares. The soldiers left in camp laid down their arms with loud lamentations; and, refusing to serve another leader, departed for their own homes by permission of the victors.

Arrived at his capital, Thomas prepared for its defence, casting guns and strengthening the fortifications. On the 21st November the besiegers opened their trenches, and, after some sorties, effected an entry within the walls, though the citadel still held out. Thomas had still his

¹ Skinner thought that Thomas had a long bout of drink and consequent incapacity at this period.

two faithful friends and about 1,700 men, and with these he continued his resistance. In these operations the leader of the Begum's contingent was killed.¹ At daybreak on the 3rd December three strong columns advanced to the assault, and Thomas came out to meet them, clothed in chain armour like a Crusader of old. The enemy, as we are informed by James Skinner, who was among them, lost 1,600 men ; and he adds, "We had to come several times to hand-to-hand fighting." Skinner's brother attacked Thomas sword in hand, but could make no impression on his coat-of-mail. The Homeric conflict was renewed next morning, and trenches were traced within two hundred yards of the fort ; but all in vain : the cannon buried harmless shot in the earthen ramparts, and the fearless George, roused from his drunkenness, drove off the assailants with the old cheerful daring. Recourse was now had to mining, and Bourquin openly boasted that he was suborning the soldiers of the garrison, and was determined to take Thomas alive or dead.

All the gallantry of the Irishman was ultimately to no purpose. He had stood against enormous odds for three months, defying the power that was paramount in Hindustan ; and, after such exertions, and inflicting on the enemy a loss of so many thousands of brave men, he was more outmatched than ever. Revenge must be had for this, though Bourquin, with the ferocity of a low and selfish nature. Moreover, the desperate defence of an untenable position is an offence against the laws of war, and Bourquin had cause for anger without the generosity of nature which would mitigate such feeling in a better man. He openly boasted to his officers of the terrible example that he would make of Thomas. The conversation occurred at tiffin in the mess-tent,

¹ This was Captain Bernier, mentioned above as one of the witnesses of the Begum's marriage with Levassoult. Skinner calls him "Mr. Bunnear."

and the Europeans and East Indians present were shocked at the Frenchman's cruelty of purpose. The meal being over and the *mollia tempora fandi* coming on, these worthy fellows united in respectful but firm remonstrance, to which Bourquin so far yielded as to consent to an attempt being made to get Thomas to yield without delay or further fighting. Despite the loss of his brother, Major Smith undertook the task, and repaired to the fort under a flag of truce. The forlorn adventurer was open to reason, as his friendly visitor pointed out to him the cruelty of demanding further sacrifices from his followers in pursuing what was so easily seen to be a vain resistance. "Considering," said Thomas, "that I had entirely lost my party, and with it the hope of *at present* subduing the Sikhs and powers in the French interest; that I had no expectation of succour from any quarter . . . in this situation I agreed to evacuate the fort." •

He surrendered on the first day of the year 1802, being allowed to retain his arms, his family, and his private property, consisting of three lakhs of rupees in specie, shawls, and jewellery. Honourable terms were also given to the garrison. What was to be the next phase was still unsettled, when Thomas decided the question by an outbreak which did not admit of any hope of permanent relations. The officers had made him an honorary member of their mess, where he indulged freely in those habits of conviviality for which he was always known. One evening, after the cloth had been removed, the talk turned on politics. The Peace of Amiens was not yet concluded, and Perron was engaging—as we shall see presently—in schemes for opposing the English in Hindustan. "Well!" cried Bourquin, lifting his glass, "here's success to General Perron!" Most of the guests ignored the invitation; but that was not enough for the Irishman, who considered it a deliberate insult. Drawing his sword, he rushed at Bourquin, who had only time

to escape from the mess-tent and hide himself in that devoted to the zenana. Thomas, in his elation, sprang upon the table, where he stood waving his sword and calling on all, with peals of hoarse laughter, to bear witness that he made "the Frenchman run like a jackal." * Being presently pacified, he allowed himself to be conducted to his quarters. On arriving at the fort they found a sentry standing at the gate, and were—as a matter of course—challenged with "Who goes there?" "Sahib Bahadur," answered Thomas, giving the name he was wont to give to his own men on such occasions. On the sentinel answering that this was not the watch-word, the fallen hero's passion returned. "Not know Sahib Bahadur?" he cried, and cut the poor fellow down. It was necessary to get rid of such a guest, and the next day Thomas, with his family and his goods, was escorted to Sardhana by the still friendly Smith.

Thomas had married a French dependent of the Begum's whose Christian name was Marie, and she had borne him three sons and a daughter. These—mother and children—he left in charge of the Begum, with a lakh of rupees for their support. The Begum, it should be remembered, was deeply indebted to him, for money and for yet more; she accepted the charge and acquitted herself fairly well. An oil-painting of one of the sons—John—which used to hang in the palace at Sardhana, is evidence that the subject was a man of some consideration; his dress is handsome, though it is in the Asiatic style. The daughter is believed to have been married at Dehli and to have left issue there; and the grand-daughter of another son, James, was living at Agra a few years back, the wife of a Mr. Martin. A third son was in the service of Ranjit Singh, and rose to the command of a regiment.

Thomas went on to Anupshahr, whence he was, by order of the British Government, put on board a boat

* The words are recorded by Skinner, who was present.

accompanied by Captain Francklin¹—afterwards known as the author of several works on Indian history. As they floated slowly down the river, Thomas dictated to Francklin a quantity of information about the Sikhs and other tribes among or against whom he had been engaged; and—what is perhaps more generally interesting now—gave him an account of his life to which we have been indebted for most of our present record. But the change of life was too much for the adventurer's constitution, tried as it had been; and he died at Bahrampur on the 22nd of August, being—as was supposed—in his 46th year.

That George Thomas was the equal of General de Borgne is not to be maintained, the latter having been a military officer of good education, while poor George was but a Tipperary bog-trotter, trained on board a man-of-war such as is described by Smollett. To have risen in a few years from the forecastle to be the leader of an army and the ruler of a State, must needs have demanded no common gifts and exertions; and we may perhaps see in this forgotten wanderer more than the germs of a true hero. He was tall and handsome, a master of the Hindustani idiom, and able to read and write Persian; and, what is much more, he was true, generous, and brave, and a patriotic subject of that Empire of which his native island was, is, and ~~will~~ be, a most important part.

¹ Francklin, Captain G., *Military Memoir of G. Thomas*, 4to. Calcutta, 1803. There is a similar book on Jas. Skinner by Baillie Fraser (London, 1851). Both are in the India Office.

CHAPTER X

Condition of the Begum's Sirdhana principality not good, or only good as compared with other districts—Ill-fortune of J. H. Bellasis—The Hessings, father and son—Fate of some of Holkar's Christian officers—French under Perron.

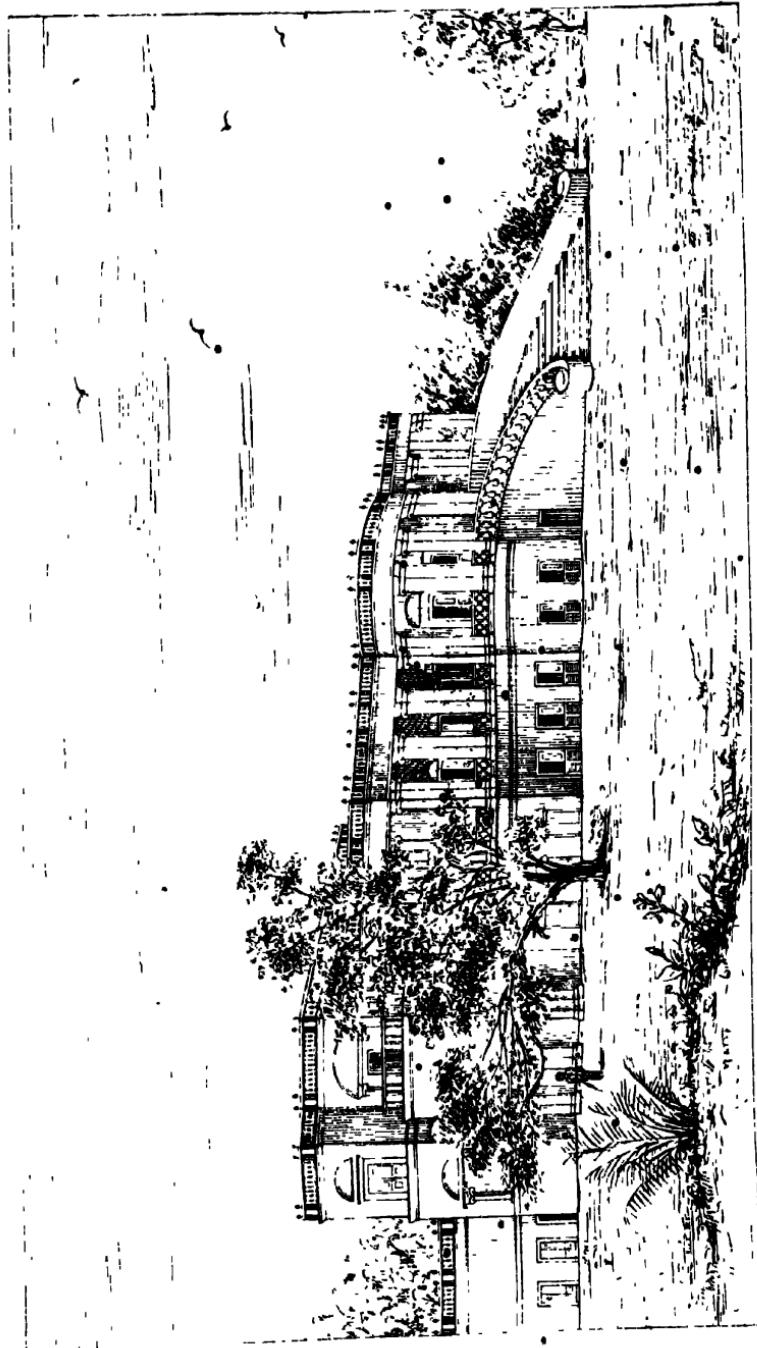
ALTHOUGH the Begum Sombre was not strictly a "European adventurer," the remainder of her story may be worth a brief notice for the light that it throws on the condition of the part of the country where her fief lay, and on the nature of the steps by which it was gradually delivered from anarchy. By the time of the flying visit paid by Thomas at Sardhana, the Begum's affairs had become finally settled; and she had no more serious troubles to the day of her death, nearly forty years later. The worst of Sombre's followers were dead, dismissed, or subdued. M. Saleur was in command; Bernier, his Lieutenant, had been killed, leading the contingent against Hânsi, as mentioned in the preceding chapter. Stepson *Algernon* had died in 1801, and his tomb is still to be seen in the desecrated church at Agra; he left a daughter, married in due time to a Mr. Dyce, a somewhat dour Scotchman, who was bailiff of the landed estates. These were managed on a hard but efficient system under which the tillers of predial land were little better than predial serfs, from whom the management endeavoured to recover the whole of the net produce. Nevertheless, the little principality, with outlying dependencies beyond the river Jumna, was a real oasis of plenty among the war-worn tracts by which it was surrounded; and the fear of falling from bad to

worse kept the peasantry from their natural means of defence—escape to other lands. Contemporary history shows that the dread of losing labourers was, in those evil days, the only check upon rapine and misrule. "The sword rose, the hind fell"; the field turned to forest; and the miserable husbandmen flocked to the Begum's territory as to a land of milk and honey. In 1840, when the Princess was dead, the Revenue Board at Agra sent an officer to make the necessary fiscal arrangements; and this gentleman reported that in those favoured regions the rates of assessment on the cultivation averaged about one-third higher than what prevailed in the adjoining territory under British rule. Now the British demand of those days professed to be two-thirds of the net rental; what, then, could have been left to the Begum's tenants? As the British territory had been at peace for more than a generation, the Begum had not latterly enjoyed her old advantages; and an observer of a few years earlier noted that, under her administration, cultivators were compelled to till the land by the presence of soldiers with fixed bayonets; luckily there were no native newspapers! The first act of the Board, after receiving the report of the settlement-officer, was at once to reduce the total assessment of the province from nearly seven *lakhs* (Rs. 691,388) to a little over *five*. Further, a whole schedule of miscellany was abolished, including export and import dues, taxes on "animals; wearing apparel, cloth of every description; sugar-cane, spices, and all other produce, . . . transfer of lands and houses and sugar-works, . . . the latter very high." The result of all this had been that, for the last few years, many of the estates had been deserted and thrown on the hands of the management, who made the best they could out of them by means of hired labour. The population rapidly returned under the new régime (*Reports of Revenue Settlement, N.-W.P., vol. i.*).¹

¹ For a few further particulars regarding Sardhana, see Appendix.

Meanwhile our modern Deborah judged her people and increased her store. When, in 1803, Generals Arthur Wellesley and Stevenson marched into the Deccan, Sindhia was assisted by the Begum's contingent under Saleur, and they formed the guard of camp and baggage during the sanguinary struggle of Asai. On the 1st of November Lake overcame the forces of Ambaji at Laswari, and the Begum had to mend her ways. Seated once more in the historic palanquin in which she had already seen and suffered, she was borne into the camp of the Commander-in-Chief, arriving in the evening just as dinner was over. On the announcement of her arrival Lake rose hastily and went to the door of his tent in time to catch her Highness in the act of descending from the litter. In the excitement of the moment the General gave his visitor a hearty kiss : "See, my friends !" cried the self-possessed lady to her attendants, " how the Padre receives his penitent child." The red coat and face of this jolly father of the Church militant are said to have struck the bystanders with astonishment ; but the result was a complete success. The Begum was confirmed in a life-tenure of all her possessions, Lake having plenary political authority from the Calcutta Government ; and for the rest of her days she maintained a sort of mediatised rule in her provincial capital. Of her palace and church—still standing—as of the unhappy offspring of the harsh land-agent and the grand-daughter of Sombre who became the Begum's heir, of all the litigation that followed, this is hardly the place to speak. Our business is with the state of Hindustan before the British occupation ; and those who desire an entertaining summary of this later history of Sardhana may be referred to the *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. 280, pp. 459, ff.

Hitherto we have been dealing with cases of persons more or less known by name ; but many of the adventurers, especially towards the end, when they



AN IRON IN SWAMI

became numerous, have been seldom heard of beyond the circle of their own families and by the few who have had the opportunity of coming across the record of Louis Ferdinand Smith. Of such was a gifted but unfortunate gentleman, Joseph Harvey Bellasis.

Bellasis was an English gentleman who began life as an officer in the Bengal Engineers. About the year 1796 —the period of the mutiny against Sir John Shore—there was great and general discontent among the officers of the Bengal Army ; and Bellasis, with others, saw fit to leave the service. Being yet young, he sought for fortune in the employ of one of the quarrelsome “native Powers” who were then contesting the miserable remains of the once mighty Moghal Empire. He had seen instances of men, with advantages inferior to his own, rising to place and wealth in such employment ; and he willingly engaged in the army of Daulat Rao Sindhia, under the immediate command of Ambaji Ainglia, often mentioned in these pages. He is reported by Smith to have possessed all the gifts of “undaunted courage, an excellent education, an elegant person, great activity of body and energy of mind ; he was generous, open, candid, and affable, an accomplished scholar and finished gentleman, of fascinating address.”

How all these talents failed to command success the remainder of the short story will show, though without fully disclosing the reasons of failure. Ambaji was, perhaps, an unfortunate selection in the first introduction of a high-class Englishman entering the native service, being always noted for his opposition to the British interest and for his leanings towards Jaswant Rao Holkar, who was the rival of his master, Sindhia ; he was also a man of parsimonious habit, and—apparently—of restless and imprudent nature. At the beginning of their relations he was favourable to the new recruit, whom he commissioned to raise four battalions. These, according to Smith, would have made the finest body of

its size in Hindustan, if only Ambaji had provided properly for their equipment and pay. Bellasis felt indignation at his chief's parsimony, which he did not attempt to conceal ; apparently his character was deficient in the suppleness which must have been requisite in a foreigner anxious to win his way with an Asiatic master. A little later—about three years before the end of the century—another Maratha General, Lakwa Dada, was engaging himself in the cause of the “Bais,” widows of the great Mahadaji (whom the new Sindhia was ungratefully plundering and persecuting), and was suddenly dismissed from the service and driven into active revolt. All Central India was instantly in commotion, the rebel chief occupying several places of strength between Bundelkhand and the Gwalior territory, in alliance with the Raja of Dattia, a petty State bordering on Jhansi. Ambaji proceeded to attack the confederates with several brigades of regular troops, that newly raised by Bellasis being one. The latter was presently ordered to capture Lahar, a very strong position about midway between Gwalior and Kalpi ; and he performed the service—which was full of risk and difficulty—as well as if he had been leading the best troops in the world rather than a raw levy. But he met with an ungenerous return : the assault of Lahar had severely tried his men, and before they had rested, or even buried their dead, Bellasis was bid to march them off to the storm of another fortress. Then he lost patience, and addressed a strong remonstrance to the Maratha General, pointing out that his compliance with the order would leave him without the means of providing for the care of his wounded, while there was no urgent necessity such as might demand the sacrifice. The enraged barbarian expelled him from the camp and confiscated his property. The young officer was now sorely tried : he had lost his position in the British army, and found himself stranded in a foreign land without the means of subsistence. In this extremity Bellasis had to

swallow his pride and sue for reinstalment ; as he was a useful, however touchy, servant, his prayer was granted ; and he was presently employed in a new campaign in the same part of the country. This was a war which Daulat Rao had begun against his own overlord, the Peshwa or President of the Maratha confederacy. In December, 1799, it fell to the lot of Bellasis to lead another forlorn hope ; Perron had now repaired to the scene of war, and found it necessary to assault a place called Saunda, in the Dattia State ; Bellasis headed the stormers with his wonted valour, and was shot through the head while mounting the breach. "Thus," writes the chronicler, "fell poor Bellasis, an ornament to society and an honour to his nation, . . . whose heart was pure and unsullied, and his sentiments noble and refined."

A very different destiny awaited men of far less merit. Two of the later Brigadiers of Sindhia's regulars were John Hessing and Brownrigg ; of the latter we need only note that, like Skinner, Shepherd, Gardner, and Sutherland, he refused to join Perron against the British, and all were ultimately provided with posts or pensions from the Company. The short career of the Hessings—father and son—demands a more detailed notice.

Hessing was a native of the Netherlands who had served in the army of the first Sindhia ever since it was reorganised in 1789 : he is described by Smith as "a good, benevolent man and a brave officer." This guarded estimate accords with the facts of the case. In 1790—about the time of the campaign against Ismail Khan, and when Hessing could not have been many months in the service, he incurred Boigne's displeasure to such a degree that he was obliged to leave his battalion. Sindhia, however, took compassion on him and gave him the command of the *Khās Risāla*—his personal troop or bodyguard—on his last visit to Poona in the early part of the year 1792. Hessing, however, does not seem to have remained long there ; for, about the time of

Sindhia's death in 1794, he had made over the body-guard to his son and gone to Agra, where he was put in charge of the fort. • But in 1801, when the force had been augmented, the son took part in the important campaign against Holkar, the fortunes of which vacillated so remarkably in Malwa. Perron, for some reason, did not take the command on this occasion ; perhaps did not like to be far away while Thomas was being hunted down. Old Hessian, indeed, never returned to active service, and soon after died in his bed at Agra. So the commonplace Dutchman, who had actually lived, in that stormy time, the life of the fabled halcyon, died before the evil days came ; and while the bones of the brilliant Bellasis lay in an unmarked ditch of Bundelkhand, his remains were interred in the finest monument of the whole cemetery, fashioned in the likeness of the famous Taj Mahal and decorated by a fulsome epitaph as long as a leading article in a newspaper. Such are the ironies of Fate.

The younger Hessian was a man of crude tactics and doubtful military merit. At a great battle under the walls of Ujjain, Holkar broke his line with cavalry charges, and killed or wounded—mainly killed—four-fifths of the force. Of the European officers, Captains Graham, Urquhart, and Macpherson, with four subalterns, were all slain in defending the guns ; Major Deridon, Captain Duprat, and Lieutenant Humpherstone were made prisoners ; Hessian owed his safety to the speed of his horse. His next appearance was in 1803, after the death of his father ; he raised the 5th Brigade at Agra, and was in charge of his father's old post, the command of the fort. When Lake arrived in October, Hessian, Sutherland, and five other European officers were put in arrest by the men, who feared their complicity with the British, but had to ask their intervention a few days later when they perceived the impossibility of making any further defence. By

the mediation of these gentlemen terms were obtained from Lake, and they were provided for at the peace which shortly ensued. Of young Hessing no further record is requisite. Sutherland died some years later, and was buried at Mathra—where his tomb is to be seen still; Deridon founded a family of farmers, whose present representatives have preserved few signs of their European origin; Brownrigg, a gallant young fellow of approved and exceptional merit, was employed by the British Government, and finally killed in action at Sirsa, fighting the lawless Bhatti population, who had been only partially tamed by Thomas.

Just at the end of its existence the trained force underwent some serious trials. The war against the Dattia Raja, in whose country Bellasis lost his life, does not seem to have proved deadly to any other of the adventurers. On the 5th of January, 1800, after Perron had gone to the theatre of operations and assumed the command, a severe action took place, in which the chief command, under Perron, was held by James Shepherd, to whom Ambaji had given the charge of five battalions. The action was undecisive, and it was not until May 31st that the overthrow of the confederates could be completed. On that day the infantry, on their side was led by an Irish officer named William Henry Tone, brother to the well-known Theobald Wolfe Tone, and himself a man of character and acquirements. Poor old Lakwa Dada was at last driven from the field, and shortly after died of disappointment and fatigue at a sacred shrine where he had taken sanctuary. The Dattia Raja was killed fighting, and Colonel Tone—though he got off on that occasion—met a soldier's death next year, in the employ of Holkar. Colonel Shepherd soon after joined the British, and was given service in the Bundelkhand Police.

Of others of Holkar's officers a more tragic record

than that of Tone remains to be told. Jaswant Rao, though a gallant leader of horse, was a brutal enough barbarian by nature and made himself worse by habitual intemperance, which finally ruined his reason and abridged his days. On the Chevalier du Drenec leaving his service to join his French compatriots in the service of Sindhia, Holkar promoted an Anglo-Indian named Vickers to the command of the vacant brigade, two others being under the charge of two excellent officers, named Harding and Armstrong. On the 25th of October, 1802, after the failure of Thomas—with whom he would have been wiser to have co-operated—Holkar was brought to bay at Indore, Sindhia's army being commanded by Sutherland. The battle was fiercely fought. Mindful of the success of the year before at Ujain, Holkar made a vigorous charge of horse, covered by a general cannonade. The enemy's line was broken, but formed again under protection of a counter-charge by Sindhia's bodyguard. While the fight was thus swaying to and fro, in mediæval fashion, among the horsemen, Vickers advanced in line and routed six of Sindhia's battalions; but Captain Dawes opposed his further progress at the head of four of the old regiments, Boigne's veterans, whose backs no enemy had ever seen. Then Holkar brought up his cavalry once more and renewed the carnage. Dawes and two subalterns were slain, the European gunners were cut down in their batteries, where Holkar himself got two wounds, and Major Harding was killed at his side. Of the loss in rank and file there is no record.

It is sad to follow the fate of the gallant Vickers. After Lake's victories in 1803, Holkar felt that he might well be the next object of attack; and, indeed, he knew that he deserved it. One of his officers had the luck to be absent, as will appear later; but Colonel Vickers (with Major Dodd, Major Ryan, and four subalterns) was beheaded by the truculent chief

on their boldly telling him that they could not bear arms against the British.

Of the brothers Smith a very few more words will be sufficient. The younger, as we saw, was killed at the beginning of the deplorable campaign of 1801, a campaign that need never have been fought but for the ambition of Perron and the too ardent patriotism of George Thomas. The elder was pensioned after the conquest of 1803-4, and appears to have settled in Calcutta, perhaps on the staff of the *Telegraph*, a paper published in that city, finally bringing out the little volume to which we have been so much indebted.

A few French and other Continental officers remain to be just named. Colonel Duprat commanded the 8th Brigade in 1798, his claim to promotion arising from a nefarious attempt to capture the Bais—widows of Mahadaji—from the camp of Amrit Rao, on the 7th June of the preceding year. Colonel Drugeon, however, was more successful in a later enterprise of the same sort, when Amrit, accepting Sindhia's assurances that molestation should cease, ventured to return to Poona (which he had left in not unnatural alarm). As the son of Raghunath Rao—whom the English called Ragoba—Amrit Rao should have known by experience both what Sindhia was and what was the general value of Maratha faith; yet he trusted; perhaps, however, he could not help himself. Drugeon watched his opportunity: One morning, on the last day of a great Muslim festival, he and his men came down to the river side at Kirki—opposite to where Amrit was encamped with the ladies—ffecting to be interested in the religious solemnities and the movements of the crowd. Suddenly, a screen of his men removing from the bank, the gallant Colonel opened fire on the defenceless ladies' tents from twenty-five field-pieces, and before the guard could rally from their first natural consternation, Drugeon was

across the river and made prisoners the occupants of the tents.¹ In November of the following year the Colonel was put in charge of the palace and person of the blind Emperor at Dehli, Duprat succeeding to his brigade. In 1799 he was, for some unexplained reason, replaced by Sutherland, not usually a favourite with Perron, who—as will be observed more fully hereafter—seldom confided in a man of British blood. Perron soon afterwards removed Sutherland from this command, which he bestowed on Colonel Pohlmann, who was either an Alsatian or a German. Of this officer we only know further that he had a command in the Deccan when it was invaded by Stevenson and Arthur Wellesley; and, with the support of another brigade under Colonel Duprat, he made that stiff resistance at Asai that cost the future Duke of Wellington a full third of his army; one regiment (the 74th foot) lost no less than 17 officers, with 400 rank and file and non-commissioned; out of ten staff-officers only two escaped, and the young General's horse was shot dead under him, while his orderly trooper was killed at his side. What became of Pohlmann eventually is not recorded; most of the French officers are supposed to have returned to Europe, but Pohlmann and Shepherd appear to have taken service under the East India Company.

¹ See Grant Duff's *History of the Mahrattas*, II. 320.























